



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

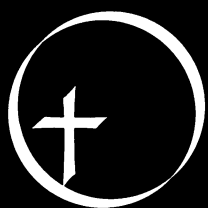
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

HARVARD DIVINITY SCHOOL  
ANDOVER-HARVARD THEOLOGICAL  
LIBRARY



From the collection  
of the  
UNIVERSALIST HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY













REV. JOHN MURRAY



# THE CORNER STONE

A BRIEF LIFE OF  
JOHN MURRAY

*For Young People*

BY  
IRENE CARROW REES

UNIVERSALIST PUBLISHING HOUSE  
(The Murray Press)  
Boston

Copyright, 1916  
By UNIVERSALIST PUBLISHING HOUSE

VAIL-BALLOU COMPANY  
BINGHAMTON AND NEW YORK

BX

9969

.M8

R4

COP. 2

To

**The Host of Honorable Men**

who "kept the faith," and have joined the

"innumerable company which no  
man can number,"

this little book is reverently  
dedicated.



## PREFACE

The prevailing idea among our young people seems to be that the lives of the early Fathers, to whom we owe so much, were prosaic and uninteresting, a monotonous round of psalm-singing days too stupid in detail to be given a moment's consideration in our present lively age. In an attempt to prove that the reverse is true, this book has been written. It is in no way intended as a history of Church or doctrine, these matters being only touched upon as they affect the story of John Murray. To take the romantic facts of his life, which set forth the simple heroism of the man, from their wordy burial in the old records and to put them in easy reading form, that our young people may realize that the joy and freedom of Universalism have been "bought with a price," is the sole aim of the author. The comprehensive histories by Dr. Eddy and others have been consulted, but Mr. Mur-

ray's *Autobiography*, together with his *Letters and Sketches*, was the principal source from which the material has been gathered.

IRENE C. REES.

Boston, November 8, 1915.

## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I JOHN ARRIVES . . . . .	1
II NEW FRIENDS APPEAR . . . . .	15
III THE PARTING OF THE WAYS . . . . .	24
IV OFF THE TRAIL . . . . .	37
V CUPID GOES TO CHURCH . . . . .	51
VI JOHN MURRAY ENCOUNTERS UNI- VERSALISTS . . . . .	59
VII THE CALL OF THE SPIRIT . . . . .	76
VIII UNIVERSALISM AND MR. MURRAY JOURNEY TOGETHER . . . . .	93
IX "THE LORD WILL PROVIDE" . . . . .	107
X MASSACHUSETTS HEARS THE NEW GOSPEL . . . . .	125
XI "ONE WHO NEVER TURNED HIS BACK" . . . . .	140
XII "THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH" . . . . .	150
XIII THE CREST OF THE HILL . . . . .	162
XIV ACROSS THE BORDER . . . . .	170





# INTRODUCTION

FRANK OLIVER HALL.

Mrs. Irené Rees has done us all a great service by condensing the Autobiography of John Murray into the readable book which follows, without sacrificing vitality to brevity. Mr. Frank Sanborn pronounced the Murray autobiography one of the most interesting books he had ever read. But even an interesting book, in order to command attention in these busy days, must be brief. We have no time to spend in reading pages that could be condensed into paragraphs.

It is an astonishing fact that with the increased facilities for economizing time we seem to have less time than our forefathers had without these facilities. If some prophet had foretold to John Murray that within a century men would make in six hours the journey from New York to Boston which took him six days, that the trip across the Atlantic which cost him a month would be accomplished in five days, that men would be talking to each other over hundreds of miles of space as easily as he spoke to his wife across the breakfast table, that by the increase of labor-saving machinery one man would be able to do the work of a hundred in his day, he would immediately have said, "When that time comes people will have leisure for everything worth while."

What are the facts? The fact is that where Murray had time to travel on horseback and by stage-coach back and forth over New England, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, preaching innumerable sermons, sometimes hours long, and people had plenty of time to listen, now one sermon a week, twenty minutes long, "with a leaning toward mercy," seems to be all that a preacher can deliver or a congregation endure. In deference to our lack of time Mrs. Rees has condensed a very long book into a very short one. People who want to know something about Murray, and know it quickly, should be grateful.

But why should any one want to know about John Murray? Was he a great theologian? No. A great author? No. A great organizer? No. A great orator? Well, let us rather say a powerful and persuasive speaker. It is for none of these reasons that we celebrate his arrival in America. He was a pioneer of religious liberty and a fearless advocate of one idea. He preached the all-encompassing and inexhaustible love of God. That was his constant theme. He played the changes on that theme through every possible key. It was not a popular theme. To proclaim it cost him much. He endured persecution and social ostracism. In order to proclaim his message it became necessary for him to stand for the personal liberty of any man to speak what seemed to him to be true.

He did not start out as a champion of religious liberty, but he became so by force of circumstances. By insisting upon his own right, he achieved larger liberty for us all. We honor him for his insistence upon a great truth. We honor him for his achievement of a great right. He was a pioneer, and as such we pay him the tribute of our affection and respect.

Like most pioneers, he was a sturdy, self-reliant and rugged personality. His epitaph was written by Paul, and is about the only epitaph that a real man would wish to have inscribed on his tomb-stone: "I have fought a good fight." He was a good fighter. He never sought entrance to a quarrel, but being in, he bore himself so that his opponents might beware of him. Indeed, as his biography shows, one of the criticisms often hurled against him was that he tried to agree with his adversary quickly while he was in the way with him. He sought grounds of union rather than antagonism. He preferred to raise the question, Wherein do we think alike? rather than, Wherein do we differ? He did not like tags. When others pinned one on him he wore it bravely as a badge of honor. He loved people, all kinds and conditions of people, and he coveted their affection in return. But he loved one thing more than the love of men, that is the love of God. He believed that God's other name is Love. He was convinced that the light which shone out

of darkness had shined in his heart to reveal the glory of the love of God in the face of Jesus Christ. So he preached the love of God, without admixture of hate or anger or any evil thing. Every idea that antagonized this one truth he rejected. Every idea that coincided with this one truth he accepted. Because he could not say, "God is love," and "God predestined the majority of mankind to everlasting Hell," at the same time, he contented himself with saying, "God is love."

Over and over again he said it. He searched the Scriptures to find confirmation of this truth. He searched the Scriptures to find satisfactory explanation for statements that seemed to contradict this affirmation. Sometimes his explanations were far-fetched and fantastic. There was no "higher criticism" in his day. Biblical scholarship was crude in comparison with what it is in our time. Much of his theology would make learned theologians to-day smile. But it is interesting and astonishing to note how close he came to what men now see to be true when all the light he had to go by shone from one proposition: "God is love." He was a pioneer exploring an uncharted wilderness. He found his way by the light of one flaming torch, the glowing, gleaming, illuminating love of God. We honor him as a pioneer in the proclamation to America of this one revolutionizing religious truth. God is Love, all-

encompassing, all-conquering, inexhaustible, never-ending Love.

But the Christian world was not ready to receive this truth in all its content. Murray believed in retribution and preached it, plainly and emphatically. But he thought that the punishments which God inflicts for sin are dictated by the same motive which prompts a good parent to punish a disobedient child. The parent loves his child even when he punishes him; God loves sinners even while He afflicts them, afflicts them, indeed, because He loves them. But Murray could not make everlasting misery consistent with the love of God. So he rejected it, and those who believed in everlasting misery rejected him.

These people conscientiously believed that Murray's preaching would do harm, encourage immorality, rob mankind of a prime motive for right living. So they tried to silence him. First they ostracised him, but a few stood by him and he went on preaching. Then they threatened him. But he was not a man to be easily frightened, and he went on preaching. Then they mobbed him, threw stones through church windows, anticipated the science of modern warfare by trying to asphyxiate his congregation as well as himself with poison gases. But Murray went on preaching. Then they prosecuted him according to law and undertook to compel him and his followers to pay for the support of the very church that was persecuting them;

they tried to send Murray to jail for acting as a Christian minister when no bishop or other ecclesiastic had laid hands upon his head. Murray went on preaching. Some of his followers saw their goods sold at auction for the support of the established church. One was cast into prison. Murray went on preaching.

It was then that he made his splendid fight for religious liberty. He and his associates insisted upon their right to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences; they asserted and maintained their right to support a church of their own choosing. They fought this question through the courts; they fought it through the legislature. The eyes of the whole country were upon them. They had the sympathy of Thomas Jefferson and other lovers of liberty. And they won. Of course they won. This would not be America if they had been defeated. It was a lovely fight for a worthy cause, and they won liberty not only for themselves but for us and all Americans who shall come after us.

In the mean time Murray went on preaching, sometimes in a church, often in a school-house or barn, frequently in the open air. His idea of a vacation was to throw his saddle bags on a horse and make a preaching tour from Gloucester to Philadelphia. He established the First Independent Church of Gloucester. He might have called it the First Independent Church of America. It

was a free church, a democratic church, a people's church, the pioneer of hundreds of free, independent, democratic churches under many ecclesiastical names that have been established since. But let us not forget that liberty always has to be achieved. Some one has to fight for it. Murray and his associates helped to achieve religious liberty for us all. Let us be grateful.

Such are the reasons why you ought to know something about John Murray and to that end read this book.

And yet—and yet—the reading will be of little value if it be simply the amusement of an idle hour. This book is put in your hands not merely that you may be entertained, but that the spirit of John Murray may quicken you also with a great desire to be a pioneer. Men and women who are the church which grew up around the preaching and the personality of John Murray, are we not shameful laggards compared with the sturdy man who landed at Barnegat a hundred and fifty years ago? It is time we realized that the only way in which we can pay our debt to the past is to pay it to the future. The only justification for the existence of the Universalist Church to-day is that we who are its fellowship shall continue to be pioneers, moving steadily in advance of the army of progress, taking our share of hardship as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

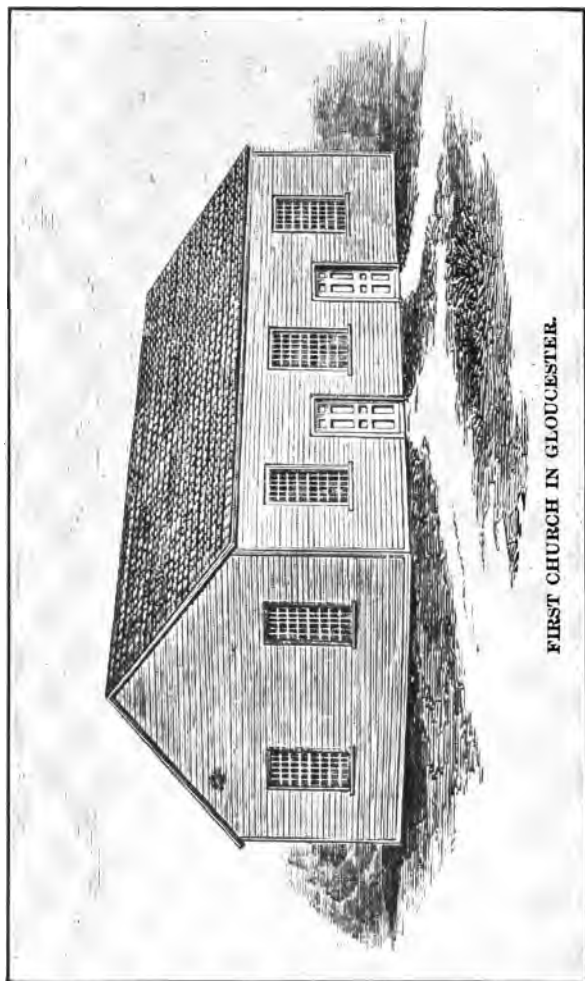
“Has the night descended?  
Was the road of late so toilsome? Did we stop dis-  
couraged nodding on our way?  
Yet a passing hour I yield you, in your tracks to pause  
oblivious,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

“Till the sound of trumpet,  
Far, far off the daybreak call—hark! how loud and  
clear I hear it wind,  
Swift! to the head of the army! swift! spring to your  
places!  
Pioneers! O pioneers!”

---







FIRST CHURCH IN GLOUCESTER.

# THE CORNER STONE

## Chapter I

### JOHN ARRIVES

If the father of John Murray could have known when he first looked with so much joy in the face of his baby son on the morning of December 10, 1741, that the boy would be known to future generations across the sea as a prophet of any such "wild and infamous doctrine" as Universalism, his grief and indignation would have known no bounds.

The Murrays lived in Alton, a small town of Hampshire, England, about eighteen miles from South Hampton, and forty-eight from London. Mr. Murray was an Episcopalian, his wife a Presbyterian, but there was little to choose between them as both were rigid Calvinists, strict believers in the two most dreadful doctrines of the time, "election" and "the damnation of unbaptized infants."

After the fashion of good English wives,

Mrs. Murray held that her husband should rule in matters religious as in all else, and John was early baptized at his home by an Episcopal minister. In all probability some sudden illness alarmed his parents, as it was customary to defer this ceremony until the child could be received at the altar. He was scarcely two when his baby sister was taken to the church for baptism and at the same time he was formally presented to the congregation. The rector held him in his arms during the consecration prayer and at its conclusion John spoke his first word, a perfectly audible "Amen." A confused murmur of astonishment and approval stirred the kneeling congregation and his gratified parents sobbed aloud. His behavior on this occasion was long spoken of as a sign of God's favor and a happy omen of future usefulness, especially as for some time he spoke no other intelligible word.

John seems to have been a vigorous, sociable little fellow, fond of outdoor life, and naturally of a merry disposition, which was all wrong from a Calvinistic point of view. Fears and melancholy were alone considered acceptable to the eighteenth century

God. One of the foremost ministers of the time once remarked that he would rather be in the company of ten thousand demons than ten laughing persons. This sentiment found favor with Mr. Murray, who endeavored to early impress his lively boy with its truth. He regarded his son with great pride and affection but treated him with such severity that the child feared rather than loved him. John "studiously avoided his presence and richly enjoyed his absence."

He was considered far too fond of play to give the proper attention to study, yet at the age of six he could read the Bible, though not always correctly. He had a clever way of filling up the gaps made by unpronounceable words with ideas of his own. On rare occasions his father would smile at this adroitness but more often John was brought to a sense of his shortcomings by a staggering blow on the ear.

His father's gloomy religious teachings soon began to fill him with terror. When he was ten years old he suffered with the fear of eternal torment and his father rejoiced in his sufferings as a sign that he was elected of God to eternal life. There

were periods when his spirits ran away with him and he forgot his fear of the rod in this world and never ending misery in the next long enough to indulge in some innocent frolic. He was made to repent with floods of tears and promises never more to offend his father or his father's God. He dared not say "*my* God," as such a remark, should he not chance to be one of God's elect, would make his predicament in the next world many times worse, if that were possible.

John had three brothers and five sisters whom he dearly loved, a proof of the uncommon sweetness of his disposition, since they were used as a spur to incite him to still greater effort to righteousness. If he failed to be a sober-minded, pious little boy, he would, by example, drag them down to perdition with himself. To be responsible for seven souls besides his own was a heavy burden for small shoulders. "I had nothing to hope and everything to fear both from my Creator and from my father," he said, pathetically.

When John was ten the Murrays removed to Ireland. Mr. Murray decided to leave in advance of the family and little

---

John, who dreaded going anywhere with him, was selected as his companion. The boy speedily forgot his fear in the delights of travel and enjoyed the experience with small regard to future consequences. He was so lively in London that his father was in continual dread of losing him and doubled his watchful severity which only quickened John's desire to make good use of any scraps of liberty that fell to him.

They left London in April, 1751, and at Pill, five miles from Bristol, John came near ending his career. His spirit of adventure led him to climb into and loosen a boat which was attached to one of the wharves. He had no intention of going more than a short distance from the shore, but the Bristol River is very rapid and the force of the current whirled him into the channel. Fortunately the tide was at flood and the boat was borne swiftly up the river instead of towards the sea. After a very harrowing experience he passed close to a large flat-bottomed boat anchored in mid-stream. To this he succeeded in making fast. There he stayed in safety until midnight, more fearful of his father's indignation than of the swift flowing river. His

cries finally attracted the attention of some men on the shore. They rowed out to investigate and took him back to his lodgings. The grief of his father, who had given him up for lost, was changed to wrath and John saw with dismay the preparations for speedy punishment. The tender-hearted landlady successfully interfered in his behalf, saying that he had been punished enough. John never forgot this kindness and years afterwards when he revisited England took great trouble to search her out.

Mr. Murray and John were detained in Pill three weeks waiting for a favoring wind, three weeks more at Minehead, and still another three at Milford Haven. Thus they were more than nine weeks in making a passage which could now be made in almost the same number of hours. Instead of reaching Ireland in season to prepare for the rest of the family, they were barely in time to welcome them.

John's maternal grandmother, a widow, in easy circumstances, lived at Cork where the family was well known and respected. Mr. Murray took a house in the vicinity and for a while all went well.



About this time the Methodists appeared in Ireland and Mr. Murray was among the first to espouse their cause. He liked their fervor and activity but did not at once join them because they were not Calvinists. His whole time was now given up to religion. His neighbors called him a saint and he was the only person in Cork the Methodists considered truly pious.

There was something particularly attractive in Methodism to John's lively, enthusiastic spirit. He liked the element of sociability in their worship, a strong point of objection with his father. "They preached often in the streets, they had private societies for young people, sweet singing and a vast deal of it, with an amazing variety of tunes." To a child who had no amusements, all this was "beyond expression charming."

Before long Mr. Murray's health began to fail rapidly, his physicians agreeing that he had an incurable lung trouble. As he grew weaker his religious vigilance for his family increased. He was determined to leave every soul of them firmly grounded in his own particular ideas. Since he could not keep his children from school, they nec-

essarily mingled with others and caught words and habits which he lost no time in correcting with great severity.

When John was twelve the Murrays lost almost everything they possessed in a fire which burned their house to the ground. Mr. Murray nearly sacrificed his life in rescuing the sleeping baby, having just crossed the threshold with the child in his arms when the roof fell.

As long as he was physically able, Mr. Murray arose at four o'clock in the morning, summer and winter. The most of the time till six he spent in prayer and meditation. At six the family was called. John as the eldest was ordered into retirement for prayer. The child was not always in prayerful mood and when his father was not with him the time was occasionally spent in other ways. This deceit never failed to torment his tender conscience the rest of the day. When the family had gathered, John read a chapter in the Bible which was followed by a long prayer from his father. Then came breakfast and the children were sent to school. At night the family again came together for devotions. The conduct of the children was examined

---

and their faults punished, John, as an example to the rest, being dealt with the most severely. Sometimes Mrs. Murray tearfully interceded for the boy but her husband invariably responded in the language of Solomon, "If thou beat him with a rod, he shall not die." There could be no more pitiful illustration of the doctrines of the time than this stern but secretly affectionate father, making the boyhood of his best loved child a torment that he might save him from eternal misery. Bible reading and prayer closed the day.

This was the story of an ordinary week day. Sunday was a real tragedy to the children, "a day much to be dreaded," John says. They were awakened at dawn to lengthy private devotions and a hastily eaten breakfast. The shutters were tightly closed, light being admitted only from the back of the house. No noise without could bring any of the family to the window. Not a word was spoken except on religious topics. All who could read, children and servants, had their allotted Bible chapters. Then came family prayers, after which John read aloud "Baxter's Saints' Everlasting Rest." Poor Mrs. Murray was in

terror lest the younger children should grow uneasy and interrupt.

At the melancholy tolling of the bell the family proceeded to church in solemn procession. John, walking beside his father, was commanded to keep his eyes straight forward and not let them "wander to vanity."

In the church he sat barricaded by the paternal elbow and found for his parents the Psalm, the Epistle, the Gospel and the collects for the day. Any inattention was vigilantly noted for punishment.

On the return from church John was sent to his room for prayerful meditation. When he came out, the chapter from which the preacher had taken his text was read and he was questioned about the sermon. Generally he could repeat part of it. Dinner was hastily eaten in silence. No one was permitted to go out of doors. The family read the Bible or religious books till time for afternoon service, from which they returned to further private devotions, readings and examinations. An extended family prayer closed the longest and dreariest day of the week. Friends and neighbors of the Murrays often united with them in

---

the evening exercises. As Mr. Murray's health declined such Sundays resulted in great fatigue but he counted all physical sufferings caused by religious zeal as an honor.

One melancholy day when John, assisted to his conclusion by his father's rod, had been made bitterly sorry for some childish frolic, he retreated sobbing to his room and then upon his knees kissed the Bible to make his vow of repentance more binding. Within a few hours he was taken to hear a violent preacher who chanced to select for his text "Swear not at all." The sermon thoroughly convinced poor John that he had committed a grave offense in making his vow to be good; that even such a simple expression as "Upon my word" was a crime against God. Was ever a poor child more tormented by deserving parents and zealous ministers? Even the usual solace of childhood was denied him for he could not expect consolation by confiding in either father or mother. No wonder that in later life he referred to Universalism as the "Sunshine of God's presence."

This sermon made such an enduring impression that for a long period he remained

“a good boy.” He gave up play entirely, his one recreation being work in his grandmother’s beautiful garden. She arranged that he spend all his spare time as her assistant and the days which followed were among the happiest of his life. Unfortunately, his father found it necessary to remove from the neighborhood, and the garden bloomed no more for him.

Near his new home was an Academy of high reputation. The principal, an Episcopal clergyman, took a great fancy to John and offered to take him into his home to educate as his son, promising to send him later to a university. It was a great opportunity, but Mr. Murray refused it, fearing for the boy’s eternal salvation if deprived of his guidance.

John had one friend at the Academy whom he dearly loved, though he was given small opportunity to be with him. Hearing that he was to leave town on a Sunday morning John stayed from church to make a farewell call. Mr. Murray was ill at home, but one of his friends took pains to report John’s absence from meeting. The chastisement which followed did not prevent his running away shortly afterwards

to see a review of soldiers. He went without food all day and took supper with some hospitable cottagers who invited him to join them. It was the sweetest meal he ever ate, he said, and afterward he went home cheerfully to take his whipping, considering the joys of the day well worth it.

Mr. Murray finally joined the Methodists. John Wesley became a frequent and honored visitor at the house. He differed on certain doctrinal points from Mr. Murray but revered and loved him. John, he treated with distinguished attention, his one fear being that he had "imbibed his father's damnable Calvinistic principles."

Nevertheless, he was willing to take the risk of giving him a class of forty boys to instruct. John was then scarcely fourteen, but seems to have been equal to the situation. He led them in singing and in prayer and catechized them severely on religious matters much after the manner of his father. Such religious devotion in one so young attracted much attention. John became a shining light and even reverend, gray haired men sought his society. He was referred to as the wonderful "child of much watching and earnest prayer." To

his proudly pious father these remarks were very flattering. John himself felt so complaisant under the universal praise that his father felt a warning necessary.

"You now, my dear," said he, "think you know everything but when you really obtain superior information you will be convinced that you know nothing."

Although the Murrays did not withdraw from the Episcopal communion, their strong friendship for Mr. Wesley and their activity in Methodism aroused the ire of the Episcopal rector. John had a disquieting way of asking embarrassing questions when he attended the confirmation class which contributed to the irritation of his pastor. So provoked was the worthy man that he failed to inform John of the date of the confirmation. John learned of it, however, at the last moment and created quite a sensation by presenting himself at the altar while the service was in progress. The bishop was too well pleased with John's answers to his questions to pay any heed to the rector's whispered protest that John was a Methodist, and he was confirmed with the others.

---



## Chapter II

### NEW FRIENDS APPEAR

About this time Mr. Little, a man of great wealth and position, joined the Methodists. As he had been a violent opposer there was great rejoicing, and the Murrays in particular received him with open arms. The two families became so intimate that they spent a portion of each day together. John and Mr. Little's second son were inseparable companions, even to the point of arousing the jealousy of the elder brother.

Mr. Little and his wife equaled the Murrays in religious zeal. Although well along in years, they used to rise at four o'clock in the depth of winter and go about summoning the neighbors to attend the morning service, which was at five the year round. Mr. Murray was often unable to attend but John was always present and the Littles were delighted with his zeal.

Association with this family added much to John's happiness. Mr. Little had a

large library of standard works and John was free to feast at will upon these hitherto forbidden fruits. They made a pleasing change from the perpetual diet of "Baxter's Saints' Rest," to which he had been treated since infancy. He thought it the part of prudence, however, to say nothing to his father of this new source of pleasure.

It was at Mrs. Little's that John met a Miss Dupee, who was paying the family a long visit. She was over twenty-five and a Methodist with a reputation for great piety.

Unusually short of stature, sallow of complexion, large of feature and with a disagreeable cast in the eye, the lady's claims to beauty were few. The boys were in the parlor when she arrived but slipped out as soon as possible. They talked her over and decided with the remorseless cruelty of youth that she was just about the plainest person they had ever seen and that they were both too busy to give her much attention. In compensation for an unattractive face, she had a sweet voice and a charming manner, a combination which amply avenged her with the boys, for inside of three weeks they both fancied themselves violently in love with her. Neither guessed

the plight of the other but attributed sighs, groans and melancholy looks to religious fervor.

At last John confessed to his friend and was dismayed to hear a like confession from him. He was sure the end had come to their friendship but young Little declared that since John had been the first to mention his love, he had the prior right to the young lady. John was equally generous. He embraced his friend, exclaiming with tears, "No, my noble-hearted friend, never will I accept such a sacrifice." They decided since they could not tell for which of them "the heavenly Father had designed this treasure," that each should have an equal chance to win her affections, wisely leaving the final decision with the lady herself.

The ardent John soon wrote her a letter full of his boyish love. He did not dare entrust it to a servant lest it fall into the hands of his father, whose anger he feared even more than the lady's "No." One Wednesday night returning from meeting he found a chance to slip it into her hand, begging that she read it in secret. Miss Dupee must have been something of a

coquette for she gave him an eloquent look and a pressure of the hand which sent him to the seventh heaven of delight. From then until Friday evening he kept away from Mr. Little's and scarcely ate or slept. He never dreamed that she would betray his confidence, least of all to the one he most dreaded; but the lady chose, instead of sending her answer direct to John, to enclose it in a letter to his father.

John entered the house that Friday night with more than his usual dread of his father's presence and his fears were well grounded. He found the family assembled and Mr. Murray in a state of truly awful wrath.

"Come hither, sir," he thundered, and beginning a slow search of his pockets, during which his son stood a trembling culprit before him, finally brought forth and unfolded a letter which John instantly recognized as his own to Miss Dupee. Mr. Murray read it aloud with contemptuous comments which cut like lashes and sent the boy from his presence humiliated and angry, but completely cured of his fancied love. At the moment he detested his father, Miss Dupee, and himself. Mrs. Murray felt

---

keenly for him but dared not interfere. He fled for sympathy to his friend Little, whose indignation rivaled his own. That Miss Dupee was sufficiently honorable to mention the matter to no one but his father, somewhat softened John's bitterness toward her.

This episode served to bind the young men more closely together and there followed a period of happy companionship which was abruptly brought to a close by the sudden illness and death of young Little. It was a severe blow to John and he was "beyond expression wretched." "A gloomy religion makes death horrible!" he wrote in his diary.

While the grief was still fresh, the remaining son of Mr. Little was stricken with a similar fever and his death soon followed. John himself contracted the disease and was dangerously ill for many weeks. On his recovery, the Littles seemed to have transferred to him the love they had lavished on their sons, hardly allowing him out of their sight. They ended by asking the privilege of adopting him, but, as before, Mr. Murray could not bear the thought of losing his authority over John. He felt

that Mr. Little's wealth would give the boy indulgences which would surely lead to his ruin. The offer was so tactfully refused, however, that no offense was given. Indeed, the Littles held such an opinion of Mr. Murray's wisdom and piety that they would not have presumed to censure any decision he might make.

A religious melancholy, sufficient to delight the most austere, now took complete possession of John. He gave up everything to devote himself to his father and went nowhere and did nothing without his sanction. The two spent hours together in prayer and conversation. They drew nearer to each other in these last months than in all the previous years. Yet even so, John confessed that his feeling was one of reverential awe rather than affection.

Mr. Murray continued to conduct family prayers, though sometimes his voice was so weak as to be scarcely audible. On Good Friday he called the family and servants together to tell them the end was near. After beseeching the children to obey John as the elder brother, and the one he had appointed to take his place, he asked John to conduct family prayer that he might have

the joy of hearing him before he died. Divided between grief and his still dominant fear that he would fail to satisfy his father, John dropped to his knees by the bedside opposite his weeping mother, and with groans sobbed out his petition. At its conclusion his father exclaimed, "Now, O Lord, let thy servant depart in peace," and with his hands upon his son's bowed head gave his blessing. John would have watched by the bedside all night, but his father dismissed him with, "Go to rest and the God of your fathers be ever with you." These were the last words John heard him speak. Before dawn he had passed away.

At once the house was thronged with weeping friends, for Mr. Murray was not only esteemed as a saint in the community, but was sincerely beloved by his neighbors. In Ireland it is the custom to watch by the dead till burial, and at Mr. Little's suggestion, continued services of prayer and preaching were held day and night in the house till the funeral, the time being apportioned among friends, John taking his share with the older men.

With his father's death, John's entire feeling towards him changed. He suffered

the keenest remorse for having ever rebelled against his rigid discipline, and he assumed the guidance and correction of his brothers and sisters in a manner which produced stubborn rebellion in a very brief time. Matters came to a crisis when he tried by a severe whipping to restore his next younger brother to the narrow path of virtue from which John deemed he had wandered. Mrs. Murray was appealed to and took time for consideration. That evening she gathered the children around the father's vacant chair and with gentle reproof called to their remembrance his dying injunction, committing them to the care of their elder brother as the head of the household. Her wise words brought a peace to the little family which was unbroken as long as they remained together.

Shortly after his father's death, John was able to gain possession of an estate, part of his mother's patrimony, which had fraudulently been taken from the family some time before. This good fortune relieved them from further financial anxiety. Their new home was attractive and surrounded by ample grounds which John delighted to improve. The entire family



were happy and contented, receiving and making many visits. They were so altogether comfortable that John's conscience gave him many a twinge. The sighs and groans and abundant tears which would be so many proofs of righteousness were all absent.

## Chapter III

### THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

The intimacy with the Littles continued and when the proper interval after Mr. Murray's death had passed, Mr. Little, who was now an old man, again asked John to live with him. It was distinctly to the advantage of all concerned, and Mrs. Murray, to whom John left the decision, readily consented.

This step of Mr. Little's aroused the jealousy of certain of his relatives, particularly of some nephews, who had hoped that one of them would be chosen as his heir. They strove without success to prejudice him against John, and every act and word which could be construed into wrong was reported and lost nothing in the telling.

As the months went by, John met many traveling preachers and often went on short missionary journeys with them. Mr. Little approved of these trips and abundantly supplied him with money. On one

occasion when he stopped at his mother's to say good-by, he discovered that his purse had been filled with gold instead of the usual silver. Without mentioning his intention, he returned at once to tell Mr. Little, who smilingly said, "I meant to give you gold; use it well."

It so happened that a nephew of Mr. Little was calling on Mrs. Murray when John opened the purse. He lost no time in reporting to his uncle, with many sighs and uprollings of the eyes, that John had just made off hurriedly with gold which had undoubtedly been given him by mistake. Mr. Little hugely enjoyed his nephew's discomfiture when he learned the truth. John confessed that he brought not a shilling of that money home. "I was never sufficiently sensible of the value of money to retain it in my possession," he said.

It was during one of these journeys that he preached his first real sermon. The minister he accompanied took his arm and without warning led him into the temporary pulpit which had been erected. There he left him, taking a seat himself in the congregation. John made the best of a difficult situation, and preached a good sermon.

After this his services were in demand both at home and abroad, and he became quite famous in his small world, to the infinite delight of his mother and Mr. Little. His success increased the envy of his old enemies and added to them certain religious rivals. These made themselves busy in carrying to John Wesley tales of John's Calvinistic beliefs. Mr. Wesley's old fears with regard to the doctrinal principles of the Murrays revived. A watch was set over John that his speeches and sermons might be reported at headquarters. Young and unsuspecting, he was no match for his crafty enemies. The matter was not improved by his habit of confiding everything that happened to his trusted friends. They in turn brought to him every story afloat. Shortly he was distressed and astonished to find that his own confidences were town talk. These troubles, however, were only passing clouds.

John's absences from home began to increase, not only because of his religious duties, but from his fondness for society. He had great charm of manner and his flow of spirits, when he was not thrown into melancholy by his dismal doctrines, made

---

him much sought after. Mr. Little objected to these diversions and John felt hurt. Mrs. Little and her daughter Anna acted as peacemakers, but he continued to grow restive under the restraints placed upon him. One evening when he returned, he found that all the family but Anna had retired. She wept bitterly as she told him of Mr. Little's anger at his absence that evening. She begged him to yield to her father's wishes and remain at home with them. John comforted her as best he could and was in the act of kissing her hand when the door opened and Mr. Little came in.

"So, sir," he exclaimed, his face flushing with anger, and without another word he led Anna from the room. There was no sleep for John during the rest of the night.

The next morning he had a long and affecting talk with Mrs. Little. She had been a second mother to him, and rather than give further pain, he promised that in future his evenings should be devoted to the family.

For some months he firmly held to this resolve but Mr. Little was exacting in his demands, and a great longing to get away

to England where he might enjoy personal liberty began to grow in him. He again began to make outside engagements till gradually most of his evenings were spent abroad. Mr. Little, his wife, and daughters sat silent around the evening lamp, till Mr. Little would say with anger, "Where is our young gentleman to-night? Any society but ours!" Then heavily sighing, "Well, let us go to bed. It will be late before he returns." On his part, John felt that Mr. Little's fault finding was unreasonable and selfish; since his time was employed either in religious work or in the most innocent relaxations, he saw no reason for censure.

It was now that he began to refer to some higher Power than his own will which directed his steps, leading him in paths he would never have voluntarily chosen. No man ever had greater belief in the direction of a Divine Providence, and no man ever had greater justification for such belief, in the events of a strange life.

There was every reason to induce him to yield to the will of his patron and remain quietly in Ireland leading the life of a pros-

perous gentleman—or preacher—should he choose. He was the chosen heir of a man of wealth and position. As the dispenser of Mr. Little's fortune, he would be a power in the community and church, a decided help to his brothers and sisters, and the crowning glory of his mother's not too happy life. To cast all this aside was to cause her bitter disappointment and grief. In addition, he loved and respected his adopted father and felt keenly that in failing to yield to his wishes, he was acting an ungracious part towards one who had loaded him with benefits. He longed unmistakably to do this thing—it was best and right—but stronger than his prudent reasoning was the urgent command of the Spirit, "Go forth."

The desire for England became irresistible. Soon there was an open rupture with Mr. Little and one night John firmly announced his intention of leaving Ireland. He suffered sharply in resisting the appeal of Mrs. Little and her daughters for whom he had a sincere regard. Why it was not more than a brotherly affection for Anna, he wondered himself. She was attractive, of a sweet disposition, and devoted to his

interests. He knew that a marriage with her would delight both families and could explain his indifference only on the ground that his mind was occupied with religious matters.

His breakfast was brought to his room next morning but he could not eat. About twelve o'clock Mr. Little sent for him. The interview was short and unsatisfactory. At its close Mr. Little asked if John had money and when he admitted that he had none, said curtly, "Hold your hat, sir." He obeyed and the gold was poured in till John thought he had sufficient to last a lifetime.

"Have you enough?" demanded Mr. Little.

"Yes, sir; God forever bless you," cried John fervently.

"Leave behind my son's fowling piece, and here ends my air-built castle," said Mr. Little, and turning on his heel, left the room.

John was so distressed and dazed by the abrupt breaking of this tie that he left the house at once, carrying in his hands the hat filled with gold pieces. He never again crossed the threshold nor saw any of the



family. A few doors from the house he was seized with faintness and was just able to secure the gold in his knotted handkerchief before he sank unconscious upon a doorstep. The people of the house took him in and cared for him until he was restored sufficiently to go on.

At his mother's home his story caused grief and consternation, but all the entreaties in the world could not shake his purpose. He offered his mother the money he had received from Mr. Little. She would not touch a penny. The interview with her was so harrowing that he went to his chamber in despair and flung himself on his knees to ask God's guidance. As he prayed, peace came to him and he seemed to hear a voice say, "Go, and lo, I am with you alway." He went to bed and to sleep and woke the next morning thoroughly refreshed.

His grief returned when for the last time he conducted family prayers. He said good-by to his brothers and sisters and received his mother's blessing. She, good soul, during a sleepless night, had come to see the hand of God in John's determination. Then he hurried away, hoping to get

off without the sorrow of parting from his youngest and best loved brother, but the little fellow jumped out of the hedge to the path before him and, clasping his knees, asked where he was going. When John could not control himself enough to answer, he added, "Take me with you, brother!" John caught him in his arms and, after passionately kissing him, put him hastily down and turned away, his eyes blinded with tears. The bitterness of death was in that good-by, and no one could have censured him more than he censured himself for the step he was taking, but there was no thought of turning back.

He was to make the journey on foot to Cork, his box having been sent the day before by wagon. He walked steadily along, his staff in his hand, too sad in heart to lift his eyes from the ground, and at the top of a long hill he sat down on the stile for a farewell look at the beautiful valley spread below him. There was his mother's home with the garden and fruit trees he had planted. Farther on stood Mr. Little's stately house. Not a spot in the lovely scene but held some dear memory which called him back. And he was

leaving all this for what? The inward call to some higher destiny of which he had no knowledge. Twice he started on only to come back for another look. At last, with a murmured prayer for the protection of those left behind and of guidance for himself, he resolutely turned away and stopped no more till he saw the distant spires of Cork. Across the sunset meadows floated the vesper bells of Shannon on the river Lee. The melody brought him a message of cheer and he finished his journey with rising hopes.

At twilight he reached his grandmother's house and was warmly welcomed till he had told his story and announced that he was to sail for England. Then both his grandmother and his aunts were vigorous in their condemnation. John had received all the blame he could bear with meekness. He arose at once, saying he had not come for aid, and left the room. His pretty cousin followed him downstairs, begging him to remain with them, but he was too hurt and angry to listen to her. He had frequently preached at Cork and had many friends who were eager for the chance to entertain him. He did not see his grandmother

again till one afternoon, after he had preached at the Methodist church, she came forward and took his hand. She had been deeply moved by his sermon and asked him to go home with her. They passed a pleasant evening together.

When they parted for the night, his grandmother said, in a voice shaken with emotion, "You are under the guidance of a higher Power and are ordained to call many from darkness to light. The God of your father will bless you and make your way prosperous. Look no more on what you have left behind, but look forward in faith. I did wrong to condemn you. God is the potter who will do with you as seemeth good."

The words were an immense comfort and John treasured them in his sore heart.

The Methodists of Cork liked young Murray's preaching and urged him to remain in Ireland to take charge of a church in Limerick, but his stay in the city had not been altogether agreeable. Bitter religious disputes were running high. Election and other of his cherished doctrines were particularly unpopular and had been sharply attacked by the Wesleyites. He

was anxious to get away before being involved in discussions which would surely make for him religious enemies, the most relentless of all foes, as he had already learned. Always craving companionship, and even from childhood disliking to do anything alone, it was not to be wondered that just now his longing for friendship was particularly keen. He wished to leave at once, but there were no daily voyages of swift steamers in those times, and he was obliged to wait two weeks till a vessel was ready to sail. During these last days he lived as quietly as possible, expressing himself with caution, and devoting his leisure to his grandmother and her friends.

The delay which he regarded as a misfortune proved an opportunity, for it brought him the friendship of the famous preacher, George Whitefield, who came to Cork in the interval. Whitefield's wonderfully magnetic preaching and genial personality at once won Murray's admiration. The latter was delighted to find the preacher a Calvinistic Methodist, the first he had met.

Whitefield was criticised by the Wesleyites for his joyous living. He never

thought it a crime to be happy and often displayed what was considered "an unbecoming levity." The close watching of the Wesleyites bothered him not a whit; he went his own way rejoicing, friendly to all. His cheery spirit roused young Murray from his melancholy.

The last night in Cork Mr. Murray spent delightfully with Mr. Whitefield and other friends at the home of a Methodist minister named Trinbath. The host was a man of wealth, with an accomplished wife and lovely children. Mr. Murray regretted he had not met so charming a family before; yet this evening, one of the happiest of his life, was the cause years afterward in far-away America of placing him in a most trying situation.

## Chapter IV

### OFF THE TRAIL

Early the next morning he left the green shores of old Ireland forever. He was too overcome to speak to the good friends who came to the vessel to see him off, but said good-by with eyes and hands. His high hopes of life in England were for the time completely overshadowed by the sorrow of parting, but, thanks to the buoyant disposition bequeathed him by his French ancestor, he landed in England after a three days' voyage "as if treading on air."

He left the ship at Pill that he might look up and thank the kind landlady who had once saved him from a whipping and was distressed to find her dead. Nothing could long quench his joy at being free in his native land. It was glorious weather and he decided to walk the five miles to Bristol; "five miles of rapture," he called it.

When the landlord of the inn at which he stopped for dinner learned that he was

a Methodist from Ireland, he invited other Methodists to meet him. They received him with great enthusiasm, inviting him to preach at public meetings and in private houses. Mr. Murray had purposely taken no steps to announce his intended arrival to the leading Methodists of England that he might be free to unite with the followers of Whitefield rather than of Wesley. The stay in Bristol was made so pleasant that he remained much longer than he had planned. On the last evening he walked a short distance out of town to attend a meeting. He was charmed with the place and people and they were so pleased with his conduct of the service that he was urged to remain with them. He was sorely tempted to consent but the attraction of London was still irresistible.

The next afternoon he walked to Bath. The sight of the soft green carpet of old England, the blossoming hedgerows, the fertile fields, the song of the skylark, the gentle call of the cuckoo, all raised his spirits to the highest pitch and when he chanced to meet some haymakers, he burst out in rapturous praise of the country and gratitude to its creator. He ended by ask-



ing the name of the lovely river on whose banks they stood.

"The Avon," replied one of the men.

"The Avon?" repeated Mr. Murray; "why, then it flows through the native place of Shakespeare!"

"Shakespeare?" questioned the haymaker; "who is he?"

"Oh, a writer," replied Mr. Murray, evincing no surprise at the man's ignorance of his illustrious countryman. Nor was there reason for any, since the most ordinary learning was not common in those days. This was nearly a hundred years before the beginning of Queen Victoria's reign, at which time only about half the adult population of England could read and write.

"I fancy you are a Methodist," said one of the men.

"I cannot deny it," was the reply.

"Then my Bess will be glad to see thee, I warrant thee. Wool thee come along with me? Thee may go farther and fare worse, I can tell thee that."

"Aye, aye, best go with him," said the other.

Mr. Murray accepted the invitation, in-

wardly thanking God for having shown him an hospitable friend at the entrance to a strange city.

“Here, Bess, I have brought thee home a young Methodist; I know thee will be glad to see him,” the haymaker called to his wife. “Thou must find out his name for thyself.”

Bess was a woman of excellent manners and a warm heart. She and Mr. Murray became friends at once and when the haymaker returned at the end of the afternoon he found them still busily talking and no sign of supper.

“What, Bess; no supper for our guest?” he exclaimed.

Bess jumped to her feet, amazed at the flight of time, and shortly had a substantial meal set out. After evening prayers Mr. Murray was shown to a comfortable room and awoke next morning in high spirits. The friendly couple would not hear of his leaving them. After breakfast and prayers, the haymaker went to the fields and Mr. Murray and the wife continued their conversation in the intervals between household duties.

Bess told him that the church at Bath

had settled a Mr. Tucker as pastor. This was good news to Mr. Murray, who had known and dearly loved him in Ireland, but when she went on to say that Mr. Tucker had recently inherited thirty thousand pounds, he hesitated to make himself known, fearing that such a rise in fortune might have made him forget his former friend. Fortunately, he decided to call with his hostess and was warmly received.

Mr. Tucker introduced him to his wife, exclaiming, "This young man is the oldest son of the best man I ever knew. I love this young person as his son and for himself. When you know him you will love him as I do."

This was a pleasant welcome in a strange land and Mr. Murray was particularly glad to have his kind hostess who had taken him in from the roadside hear it. Mr. Tucker would not allow him to leave his house nor the city for some time. It was to his credit that young Murray did not forget his first friends, the haymaker and his wife, but faithfully called on them every day. They were exceedingly proud of having introduced so popular a minister. He preached for Mr. Tucker, who showed him every pos-

sible kindness, and sympathized with his embarrassment about continuing with the Wesleyites because of their growing opposition to Calvinism, as he was in much the same position himself.

In spite of the entreaties of these friends, Mr. Murray determined to continue his journey, though half vexed at his own persistence in leaving a place where everything was to his mind for the uncertainty of the London future. Mr. Tucker engaged his seat on the coach, paying all the expenses of the journey and making him a handsome present, beside.

The night before starting Mr. Murray left word at the coach house that he would walk ahead in the morning, letting the coach overtake him. He was up and off at dawn. The sunrise, the songs of the awakening birds, the scent of the new mown hay on the fresh morning air filled him with such exhilaration and hope that he had walked nineteen miles and had stopped for breakfast before the coach came up with him. They bowled along over the fine road at a rapid rate, reaching London at sunset.

Once more he was in a strange city without plans or friends. He had been given

letters of introduction, but in the excitement of leaving they had been forgotten. Elated at being at last in London, he left his trunk at the coach house without mark of identification and wandered about the streets in ecstasy till nightfall. By that time he was tired and hungry and the high spirits of the morning had departed. He went to a tavern for the night, but even a warm supper and the friendliness of the landlord failed to check his growing homesickness. His remembrance of Mrs. Little's prediction that he would see his folly and return to find their door closed determined him not to go home whatever happened. It was the first sorrowful night he had passed since leaving his mother's.

In the morning he felt little better. He had forgotten where the coach house was but the landlord knew, and after some trouble, secured his trunk. That same day he called on people with whom he had lived when visiting London with his father. They were delighted to see him and introduced him among their friends. These new acquaintances were gay, pleasure-loving people, vastly different from his usual solemn associates. Some few Methodist

friends whom he had known in Ireland called, but soon dropped him in great displeasure at the frivolous companions with whom they found him. Often the example and precepts of his father stared him in the face and aroused remorse, but never for any length of time. Once he met a Methodist preacher, a former friend, who severely upbraided him. The bitterness of the attack aroused his wrath but not his repentance. He wondered himself that he could sufficiently forget his early lessons to lead a life of pleasure. On the other hand, with the many temptations about him, it was strange that once started he went no further. It was innocent frolic, all of it, though carried to great excess. He cared nothing for liquor and often threw the wine under the table that he might keep a clear intellect for keener social enjoyment.

It is a question how long this gay life would have lasted if his money had not given out. Matters were brought to a crisis when his tailor sent in an unexpectedly large bill. He had barely enough to meet it and was stunned to reflect that in

.

---

a year the money which he had thought would never be exhausted was already gone. His sad reflections were interrupted by the arrival of a gay young friend with an invitation to a particularly lively party. Casting aside his cares, Murray was off with him, gay as a lark. He made no retrenchment, his debts increased and stories of unpaid bills began to be whispered about. Often he went as the guest of wealthy friends, who declared he was the life of their parties and could not be spared.

The Easter holiday was a time of special gayety in England and Murray's particular chums planned an excursion of some days to Richmond. Although he was invited as usual, he felt his friends were growing less insistent on his company, and declined. It was impossible for him to go except as a guest, for the condition of his pocketbook could no longer be ignored. He took a long solitary walk to reflect on his situation. One ha'penny was all he possessed in the world, and that he shortly gave to a passing beggar. For a long time he wandered aimlessly through the fields and at length hungry, exhausted, and in de-

---

spair, sat down beneath a tree. He remembered that it was nearly the anniversary of his father's death and the scenes of his life in Ireland came rushing back and filled him with remorse. What would that father say to his present situation? The cheering thought that he could return to God like the prodigal of old was immediately put to flight by the gloomy reflection that undoubtedly forgiveness would be denied him. He even contemplated self-destruction. Night came on and it was necessary to go somewhere. He felt an irresistible longing to return to Whitefield's tabernacle, which he had not visited in months. Reaching there just as service was beginning, he took a seat in a dark corner beneath the gallery, not daring to raise his eyes lest he should see some acquaintance. Mr. Whitefield himself was the preacher and his final appeal young Murray thought God meant especially for him. It was this: "There may be in some corner of this house a poor, despairing soul who is suffering the dreadful consequences of his wandering from the sources of true happiness. I have to inform him that God is still his true Father. Let him prostrate



himself before Him and He will shortly send every needful aid."

With streaming eyes young Murray left the tabernacle, firmly resolving to abandon his life of pleasure. Many of his former friends ceased to call when they found him given up to gloomy meditations. Others who really loved him lingered to offer financial aid, thinking the lack of money the sole cause of his depression and change of heart. A few, affected by his words, attempted to follow his example, but one by one they dropped away and soon he was leading a solitary life. Scorning the frivolous himself he, in turn, was distrusted and scorned by the religious who had no faith in his change of heart.

He boarded in the house of a lively, good-natured man; indeed, the whole family he called "the sons and daughters of mirth." Formerly this had been their principal recommendation; now it offended him. He would have liked to move, but was too far behind with his board. Others whom he owed began to press him for money and his anxieties increased hourly. These were dark days and the dreadful doctrines he cherished, while they made him wretched,

at least kept him from suicide. Nothing but the dread of eternal perdition restrained him.

He was always to be found at the Tabernacle at night in some inconspicuous corner, his eyes streaming with tears. One evening a young man spoke to him.

"Cheer up, thou weeping, sorrowing soul; be of good cheer, thy God will save thee," he said.

"God bless you, whoever you are," exclaimed Murray, grasping his hand with gratitude.

The young man tried to give him consolation and made an appointment to meet him at the Tabernacle next night. On his way there Murray passed a large open air meeting of Methodists and waited a moment to watch; but when he saw, ascending the rude pulpit, the preacher with whom he had so often traveled in Ireland, the very man who had led him to the pulpit for his first sermon, he hastened away, dreading recognition.

His new acquaintance of the Tabernacle often called at his rooms and finally invited him to his own home. There John made a complete confession of the troubles which

beset him. The young man was all sympathy, promised to pacify his landlord, find him a new boarding place and procure him employment.

At the request of his friend Mr. Murray asked his landlord how much he owed him, and the response was "Not one penny," nor could the man be persuaded to take anything. When he learned that John intended to leave the house he exclaimed, "Oh, dear, oh, dear! These abominable Methodists have spoiled as clever a fellow as ever broke bread. I am sorry you are going, upon my soul I am."

The following week Murray secured a position as assistant to a broad-cloth inspector. He was thankful for any chance to support himself, but business was irksome to him and he did not enjoy his associates. He lived frugally, cutting off every luxury till he was free from debt.

He now went through the same alternations of hope and fear as to his spiritual condition that he had in his father's house. When happiest about himself he was tormented with the injustice of his salvation when so many unfortunates were left to perish but was comforted by the thought

that "such was the sovereign will and power of God."

Young Murray's Sundays and his life generally were now patterned as closely as possible after those in his old home. He arose at four in the morning, winter and summer, in order to get time for his devotions. His evenings were spent at the Tabernacle. He lived some miles off, but no storm of snow or rain was sufficiently severe to keep him away and the greater the difficulty the more he rejoiced that he was thus paving his way to heaven. In company with several others who lived at a distance, he took breakfast after early morning service at the house of one of the members. The meal usually resolved itself into an additional prayer meeting.

One Sunday, in passing over Moorfields, he noticed a large crowd about a tree and asked what was going on. He was told that a follower of James Relly, who taught the restoration of all mankind, was to preach.

"Merciful God," he exclaimed; "how wilt Thou suffer this demon to proceed?" At this time he would have considered the death of Relly as a great boon to the world.

## Chapter V

### CUPID GOES TO CHURCH

Mr. Murray attended various London churches, a practice much encouraged by Whitefield as promoting Christian fellowship. Everywhere he was not only welcomed, but treated with consideration. He called himself an independent Baptist, Methodist, Churchman, being unable to decide which he loved best. He became so zealous that he determined never to marry but to devote himself wholly to religion and mourned there was no monastic order in the Protestant church for him to join.

At the Baptist society of Good Man's Fields he met a serious-minded young man named Neale, with whom he became great friends. At all seasons they reached the Tabernacle before daybreak and prayed and wept together till the congregation arrived. Mr. Neale was an orphan with one sister. They lived with the grandfather who, according to the grandson, was a very

profligate old gentleman, abhorring the name of Whitefield. The sister rarely ventured out since it was necessary to keep her church-going secret from the grandfather. There was an older brother, William, who had married and now lived in another part of London.

Mr. Neale told Mr. Murray that his sister longed to meet and hear him speak. She had heard much in his favor and intimated that she would make a point of being at Good Man's Fields the following Sunday evening if Mr. Murray was to be there. The room was full when he arrived and the people rose in respectful greeting at his entrance, which made him feel "dignifiedly pious, seriously happy."

At once a very lovely young woman attracted his attention. He could hardly keep his eyes away and soon changed his seat that his pious meditations might not be disturbed by her beauty. By way of further diverting his mind, he asked Mr. Neale where his sister was sitting. He pointed to the charmer!

Mr. Murray had much to say that evening and never spoke better. At the close of the service he was introduced to Miss

Neale and as a result spent the night in prayer that the Lord would help him to forget her, but his desire for a monastic life had been permanently put to flight.

He declined several times an invitation from the mistress of a boarding school to lead her young ladies in conversation on matters of religion, but when the principal casually mentioned that Miss Neale was to be one of the class and again urged her request, Mr. Murray found it convenient to be present. At ten, a servant arrived to take Miss Neale home and Mr. Murray was in great distress at being deprived of the pleasure he had been anticipating all the evening. He was more fortunate a few nights after, when they met at the house of Mrs. Allen, a mutual friend. On the way home Mr. Murray proposed. Miss Neale was discreet.

"Alas, sir," she replied, "you have formed too high an opinion of my character. I trust you will meet a person more deserving of you than I can pretend to be." That, of course, was considered impossible and Mr. Murray persisted in his suit.

"You and I," she replied, "both believe in the same overruling Providence. Let

us pray to God and if we receive his sanction I trust I shall be resigned." Not a very flattering acceptance but sufficient for the lover.

The courtship was carried on under difficulties, since the obdurate old grandfather would let no follower of Whitefield cross his threshold. Therefore the engagement was kept secret from him in the hope that time or circumstances might soften his prejudice. Miss Neale's brothers were told and the younger, especially, expressed delight and approval. The pair met often at Mrs. Allen's and she carried unsealed notes between them.

When everything appeared to be going smoothly young Neale, while still professing great friendship, wrote an anonymous letter to his grandfather, stating that Eliza was receiving the attentions of a young Methodist preacher, John Murray, who was planning to marry her secretly for her money.

The indignant old gentleman sent for Eliza and asked her if she was engaged to a man named Murray. When she admitted it, he commanded her to immediately dismiss him, threatening her with disinheritance.



itance if she refused. Miss Neale begged him to see and talk with Mr. Murray, promising to abide by his decision after the interview. She had great faith in the power of her lover's magnetic personality. Her grandfather refused to listen to any such proposition and gave her three days to make the choice between Mr. Murray and himself. At the end of that time she refused to break her engagement till she was convinced of Murray's unworthiness. She did, however, offer to stay with her grandfather, if he would make no further attempt to shake her determination. This did not satisfy the old gentleman. He arose from his chair in wrath and, seizing the will in which he had bequeathed her a thousand pounds, furiously flung it in the flames. Shortly after he made another will, adding that sum to the legacy of her treacherous brother.

Not content with the mischief he had already wrought, young Mr. Neale tried another trick. All unaware that John had ever seen Eliza's handwriting, he gave him a letter signed with her name, which declared she never wished to see him again. Mr. Murray at once recognized the decep-

tion and told Mr. Neale he would take his dismissal only from Eliza's lips. Through Mrs. Allen, Murray got a letter to Eliza, telling her what had happened. She replied immediately, assuring him of her enduring faithfulness.

The grandfather kept Miss Neale very closely that she might have no opportunity to meet her lover. Once a week she was permitted to visit. Then she always went to Mrs. Allen's, where she never failed to find Murray. On Sundays she attended five o'clock morning service at the Tabernacle, since she could be back before her grandfather was up. No matter what the weather, the faithful John appeared at her gate at four and considered himself "much blessed" to be allowed to attend her. If she did not appear, he waited patiently till the dawn of day obliged him to leave and sorrowfully make his way alone to the Tabernacle.

Eliza's brother soon married and his wife seconded her husband in his efforts to separate Mr. Murray and Eliza, but without success. With all his troubles, between love and religion, he was very happy that winter.

A year went by and on the nineteenth of May, Mr. Murray and Miss Neale's elder brother William, who had always been a good friend, planned a day's excursion to the country. It was Eliza's eighteenth birthday, and scarcely had they started when they saw her approaching with a small parcel in her hand. She had left her grandfather's forever, leaving a note in which she thanked him affectionately for his kind care, but further told him that she would no longer endure his ceaseless attempts to induce her to break faith with her lover now that she was legally her own mistress. She had surrendered the keys of his house and all the money with which he had entrusted her.

Mr. Murray begged her to marry him at once but she regarded that as looking too much like an elopement and William took her to his home. The grandfather could not believe her in earnest and sent many times to beg her return.

After six months had elapsed Miss Neale and Mr. Murray were quietly married, William, his wife, and Mrs. Allen being the only witnesses. The marriage was a most happy one. Mrs. Murray's character and

disposition matched her face in loveliness. She and her husband were in absolute accord on matters of religion and they cared for nothing else. For a while they lived with William, but soon moved to a house of their own.

## Chapter VI

### JOHN MURRAY ENCOUNTERS UNIVERSALISTS

It was now that all London became aroused by the doctrines of James Relly, a conscientious and zealous preacher of the doctrine of Universal Redemption. The Murrays were urged to hear him but refused to be an "eye witness of his blasphemies." Some months after Mr. Murray's marriage, the congregation of the Tabernacle were shocked to hear that one of their most devout and charming young women had become "ensnared" by Relly's teachings. Soon she announced herself as a firm and unwavering believer in Universal Redemption.

"Horrible, most horrible!" was the verdict of Mr. Murray. He was amazed that so fine a young woman could have been induced to listen to the "pernicious errors of this detestable babbler." An ordinary backslider would have been denounced and excommunicated, but this "hitherto meri-

torious female" was considered worthy of an attempt to reclaim.

It was proof of the esteem in which he was held that "young Brother Murray" was selected to persuade this wandering lamb to return to the true fold. He was quite willing to undertake what he considered an easy task. "He that converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death and shall hide a multitude of sins," he quoted, and he asked several of his "Christian brethren" to go with him.

In solemn silence, broken only by occasional deep sighs, they sat about the room, the young woman's serenity remaining unruffled during this trying ordeal. Prefaced by a deeper sigh than usual, Mr. Murray began a violent denunciation of unbelievers—in this case, Universalists. With dignity and clearness the young woman answered him and in the discussion which followed had decidedly the best of the arguments. In concluding Mr. Murray remarked that Jesus never was and never could be the Savior of any unbeliever.

"Do you think Jesus is your Savior, sir?" she asked.

"I hope he is."

"Were you always a believer, sir?"

"No, madam."

"Then you were once an unbeliever—that is, you once believed that Jesus Christ was not your Savior. Now, as you say, he never was and never will be the Savior of any unbeliever, as you were once an unbeliever, he never can be your Savior."

"He never was my Savior till I believed."

"Did he never die for you till you believed, sir?"

Just here Mr. Murray's growing embarrassment got the better of him. He could think of nothing to say and devoutly wished himself out of the house. He shook his head, sighed bitterly and after expressing deep commiseration for the poor souls who had nothing but head knowledge, drew out his watch and remarked it was time to go as he was already late for an engagement. He was deeply mortified at this result of his first encounter with Universalism and his humiliation was increased by the presence of his friends, who quite evidently realized that the laurels of victory belonged with the young woman.

In his report to the church Mr. Murray advised the congregation "to hold no further arguments with these apostates," and for himself he adds, "I am resolved to carefully avoid every Universalist and most cordially do I hate them."

The church needed no admonition to beware of Universalists. Murderers and thieves were scarcely held in worse repute. The most scandalous stories were reported about Relly. It was affirmed that only the unprincipled went to hear him and that the street before his luxuriously appointed church was thronged with the carriages of rich profligates. The various sects of London fought furiously with each other on many points but united in their denunciation of Rellyites.

About this time a new religious society for the discussion of difficult Bible passages was formed with a leading Baptist, named Mason, as president. The meetings opened with prayer and the announcement of the subject by Mr. Mason. Each one present was allowed five minutes to express his views, the time being measured by a sand glass on the table around which the members were seated. Mr. Mason gave the sig-

---



nal to stop by a stroke of the gavel and had the privilege, if the remarks pleased him, of extending the time limit. Mr. Murray was a constant attendant at the society and was shown unusual favor in the amount of latitude allowed him.

At the close of one of the meetings, Mr. Mason drew him aside and, after many flattering remarks, asked him to take home for criticism a paper he had written against Relly's "Union," the pamphlet which had roused London by its affirmation of Universal Redemption. He begged Mr. Murray to give an absolutely honest opinion. Much complimented by this proof of the president's favor, he began the reading with greatest delight, but soon discovered that Mr. Mason, instead of answering Relly's argument, simply treated it with ridicule. When this defect was pointed out to Mr. Mason, he received the criticism very coldly. He had neither expected nor desired anything but praise and never again showed any friendliness. Later, the pamphlet was published without change.

Mr. Murray was more troubled by Mr. Mason's failure to prove Relly in error than he cared to admit. He *wanted* Ma-

son to be right and Relly wrong. Those unanswered arguments kept recurring to his mind in a disquieting way.

Some months after, when visiting Mrs. Murray's uncle, he found upon the bookshelves a copy of Relly's "Union" which he had never before seen and asked permission to take it home to read at his leisure. Even after putting it in his pocket, he was tempted to take it out again, "doubting if he were justified in touching so poisonous a thing." Curiosity conquered and he determined to see for himself "what horrors it contained."

Before opening the book Mrs. Murray and he knelt in prayer for Divine guidance. "If the volume contained truth, we entreated God to show it to us. If falsehood, we beseeched him to make it plain. No poor criminal ever prayed for life when under sentence of death with greater fervor than we asked for light to direct our steps."

With increasing conviction they read and re-read the book in connection with the Bible and were astonished and delighted with the beauty of the Scriptures as interpreted by Relly—yet on the brink of acknowledgment—they hesitated. It did not

seem possible that God could have revealed truth to a man of such self-centered, evil, life as report affirmed Relly to be. Mrs. Murray reminded her husband that the truth of the damaging stories had never been proved, and that Christ had said to his disciples, "They shall say all manner of evil against you, *falsely*." For several weeks they continued to read and discuss, while their desire to hear Relly preach grew steadily.

A Sunday came when their own minister, Mr. Hitchings, whom they greatly admired, was out of town. Mr. Murray suggested that this was their opportunity to hear Relly and Mrs. Murray agreed.

They were much relieved when they reached the church without having met any one whom they knew, for to be seen entering Relly's was a disgrace. This first visit to the meeting house proved the falsity of some of the evil reports. There were no carriages blocking the street, no luxurious church. The plain building had previously belonged to the Quakers. The only seats were common benches and the pulpit was of rough boards. Mr. Relly's manner was a surprise to Mr. Murray, who had not ex-

pected "to find so much devotion in so bad a man."

He was not favorably impressed with the small congregation in the bare little room, "for," he tells us, "they did not appear to be religious; that is, they were not melancholy. I therefore suspected they had not much piety. Nevertheless," he adds, "Mrs. Murray and I walked home in perfect silence, so deeply had our reason been appealed to."

When, at their own door, Mrs. Murray asked her husband his opinion of the discourse, he replied, "I never heard truth, unadulterated truth, before. It is the first consistent sermon I have ever heard."

After this, as often as they thought it expedient to absent themselves from their own church, they went to hear the new doctrine, but always as secretly as possible, "not wishing to lose that fair reputation which they had delighted to maintain before their neighbors," till they were sure of their own minds.

Mr. Murray now complained that their minister, whom they had formerly found so satisfying, seemed to have greatly changed—that his sermons had become in-

consistent. Mrs. Murray affirmed that the change was in themselves. She knew from her shorthand notes that Mr. Hitching's preaching was precisely the same.

They decided to retain their usual seats but to attend Relly's one-half of every Sunday. Church-going now, for the first time, ceased to be a stern duty and became a pleasure, a great enjoyment to be anticipated during the week.

Mr. Murray spent much time every day in the study of the Bible, which seemed a new book to him. He had a long talk with Mr. Hitchings, whose inability to satisfactorily disprove final Redemption went far to convince Mr. Murray of its truth, especially as the pastor had put forth all his skill, supposing his parishioner to be in search of arguments to use with others. As Mr. Murray became more sure, he regarded his friends with increasing affection and felt he could convince the whole world of "the truth as it is in Jesus."

Naturally his half day attendance at church was observed. Before long it was whispered that the Murrays were becoming regular attendants of Relly's. Their friends grew alarmed and one in particular

had a private talk with Mr. Murray and, on being told the truth, begged him not to let his views be known if he would avoid excommunication. Mr. Murray assured him there was little danger as he had confided in no one else.

Very shortly came a summons to appear before the Tabernacle society. He found a gloomy company assembled. With bitter sighs they told him the information had reached them that he attended the preaching of "that monster, Relly." Was this so? He demanded to know who had informed against him. The elders were loth to say but finally named the very man who had warned him to be careful. Mr. Murray was the more amazed as he had called on this friend on his way to the meeting to tell him of the summons and his news had been received with expressions of sympathy. They had prayed together before parting.

When Mr. Murray acknowledged that he not only regularly attended Mr. Relly's, but believed he taught the truth, there was an outburst of indignation and his trial followed. Because of the high esteem in which he was held the society offered to

let the matter drop if he would consent to keep his new opinions to himself. Naturally, he refused to be bound by any such promise. The motion that he be allowed to remain a member on his own terms was lost by three votes. At one in the morning he returned home nervously exhausted and in despair. Throwing himself into a chair, he burst into tears. Mrs. Murray met the situation with the same sweetness and courage with which she accepted all trials.

"Now," she said, "for the first time you know what it is to suffer for Christ's sake. Let us offer praise and thanksgiving it is no worse. They can murder our good name but let us not fear, our God will be with us."

In the midst of their distress came a rift in the clouds. Mrs. Murray's grandfather, who had never ceased to regret his hardness, sent for them to visit him in his country-seat near London. The old gentleman was completely won by Mr. Murray's genial personality. The greater part of his property he had put it out of his power to dispose of by will, but he promised to make all possible restitution to his granddaugh-

ter. Unfortunately, a housekeeper whom the Murrays had found for him proved a designing woman and, after winning the old gentleman to marry her, made it impossible for his family to visit him. It was a severe disappointment to the Murrays at a time when they sorely needed every friend.

With Mr. Murray's excommunication his former associates fell away from him as though he had the pestilence. He was not only let alone, which would have been bad enough, but was even persecuted. Presents which had been given him were demanded back as legal debts and he was arrested by bailiffs because no time was allowed for payment.

In spite of these difficulties, Mrs. Murray says they enjoyed a little heaven on earth because of their growing faith in a loving Father. To her delight they had a temporary reconciliation with her younger brother, who seems to have been a most unstable person, absolutely lacking in fidelity; yet the Murrays never failed to receive him with forgiveness when it pleased him to be friendly.

After the adjustment of their financial difficulties they lived very comfortably in



rural London. The birth of a son added much to their happiness, but the child lived only a year and Mrs. Murray never recovered the shock of his death. Her rapid decline alarmed Mr. Murray and they took lodgings farther out that she might have the benefit of country air. When the house was sold, they found a place four miles from the city, where for a short time Mrs. Murray's health apparently improved.

Mr. Murray was carrying a heavy burden. He had his town house and servant to maintain, also his country lodgings, physicians, nurses and medicines to pay for. It was not possible to neglect his business to stay with his wife, as he longed to do, and often when he left early in the morning, he feared to find her gone on his return. During his hours at home, Mrs. Murray made a brave struggle to appear bright and happy. Her faith that a wise God ordered all for the best never faltered. Mr. Murray was careful to keep from her all knowledge of the debts piling up against him. The situation was truly pathetic.

Since the desertion of their old friends they had purposely avoided making new among the Rellyites. Experience had shat-

tered their faith in the fidelity of religious associates. Mrs. Murray's younger brother was again unfriendly and they had seen nothing of William since Mr. Murray, with less than his usual tact, had pointed out some household mismanagement on the part of William's wife. The grandfather's doors were still barred. There was no one else to hold out a friendly hand. Matters grew so bad that assistance from some source was necessary if Mrs. Murray was to have common comforts. Mr. Murray humbled his pride and sent a note to William from a neighboring coffee house, begging him to come to him at once. William obeyed the summons and was much shocked to hear of his sister's illness but hoped Murray's affection had magnified the danger. He promised to call and came that same day but arrived too late. Mrs. Murray had breathed her last a few moments before.

Both brothers were now filled with remorse. They paid the expenses of the funeral and a few of the more pressing debts. Mr. Murray was taken to the home of the younger brother after the services. He had reached the extreme of wretched-

ness and cared not what became of him. His health declined and his eyesight failed so rapidly that he feared blindness. Often he roamed the outskirts of London, which at that time was haunted by footpads, in the hope that he might be attacked and killed by a highwayman. His one solace was from the wonderful dreams which nightly visited him. Always he was with his wife and in such beautiful scenes that he longed for slumber to come. His mother and two brothers, ignorant of his sad condition, came over from Ireland to live with him, but they were so bitterly opposed to his changed religious views that he found them little comfort.

With his mind fixed on spiritual things he often walked the streets of London in complete absorption till brought back to consciousness of his surroundings by the jostling of the crowds and the curious looks of passersby.

His entire disregard of ways and means soon brought a financial crisis. Creditors lost all patience and he was arrested and lodged in the house of a bailiff. These officers usually made a handsome profit out of an arrest while the friends of the prisoner

were arranging his release. Those who paid well for comforts were civilly treated. Since Mr. Murray was not only penniless but entirely indifferent to his situation, he was shown scant courtesy. He refused all food and drank nothing but water. He would not even use a bed, which must be paid for, if at all, by the charity of relatives, and he slept on the floor of a room hung with cobwebs. The dirty, heavily barred windows admitted but little light. Enraged at his refusal to appeal to his friends, the bailiff threatened to send him to Newgate Prison if he continued stubborn. Once again self-destruction seemed the only way out of his difficulties till a dream in the night in which his wife appeared to him with loving words of cheer so raised his mind above earthly cares that he resolved to submit calmly to his fate, but under no circumstances to appeal to any one for aid. In the morning he awoke refreshed and when his surly keeper unbolted the door to inform him that in three hours he would be lodged in Newgate, he responded with composure, "I am ready, sir."

In less than an hour William Neale ar-

rived. He had heard of the arrest through Murray's half-distracted mother and had been vainly searching London for him ever since. With great emotion, he reproached Mr. Murray for not having at once sent for him. He ordered a private room and a breakfast, which Murray refused to eat till William had promised to put out no more money for his release. After the meal William called the bailiff and showed him the receipt in full for all indebtedness. This had been in William's pocket when he gave his promise to Mr. Murray. The bailiff satisfied, they left the house at once to relieve the suspense of his anxious mother.

The two Neales now hired money to make Mr. Murray a partner in a mercantile house. As always, a business life was irksome to him, but justice and gratitude demanded that he make an effort to pay back the money advanced by his brothers-in-law. This venture was not a success. After several failures and repeated assistance from William, he at last hit on something which enabled him to pay his debts and also placed him in easy circumstances.

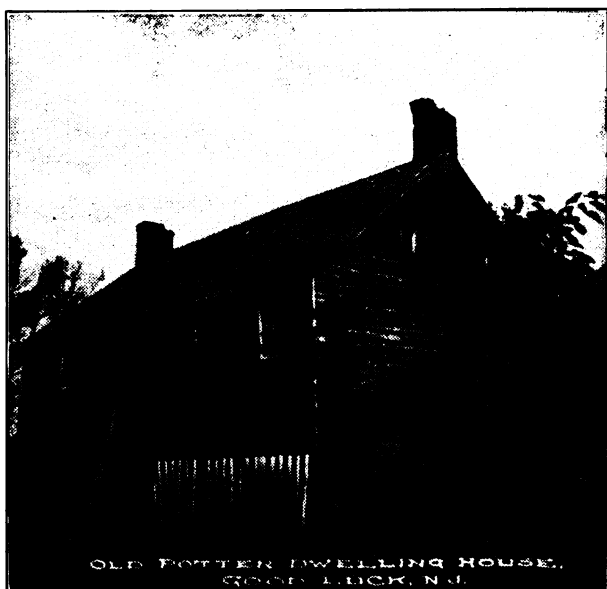
## Chapter VII

### THE CALL OF THE SPIRIT

Weeks and months dragged wearily away. Mr. Murray's interest in life did not revive. He shunned society and found his greatest happiness in meditating on that bright world to which he hoped he was hastening. He had yet to learn that grief rarely kills the young and vigorous.

During these dark days his one true friend was the man London reviled and hated, Mr. Relly. In their long walks together Relly urged him to forget his selfish sorrow in serving others by preaching the new doctrine of hope. Even his patient efforts failed to arouse Mr. Murray, who mournfully replied, "I wish to pass through life unheard, unseen, unknown to all, as though I had never been."

At the home of one of Relly's friends he met a gentleman from America whose descriptions of the new country fascinated him. His old love of travel revived, but



OLD POTTER DWELLING HOUSE,  
GOOD LUCK, N.J.





this time it was the vast solitudes in which to bury himself at the end of the journey which were the lure. Going to America in those days was equivalent to going out of the world, and his mother and brothers ridiculed the idea of his giving up a pleasant home and good prospects for a life in the wilderness.

After days and nights of prayer and deliberation, he engaged passage on the brig *Hand-in-Hand*, sailing for New York. The parting with his mother was a bitter one for both. It was extremely improbable that he would ever return to England and he begged her to think of him as one dead. William Neale, a faithful brother to the last, went with him as far as Gravesend. The wind being unfavorable the ship could not sail at once and Mr. Murray, weary of waiting on board, climbed a high hill overlooking the ocean and sat down beneath a tree. While he was sadly meditating, the wind shifted and he saw the signal for departure hoisted on the vessel. He fell on his knees and, in a voice broken with emotion, prayed fervently till he heard an inward voice bidding him "Be of good cheer, your God is with you." He arose and went

on board with a lighter heart. At sunset on this Saturday evening, July 21, 1770, the *Hand-in-Hand* dropped down stream with the tide.

The next morning when they rounded Beachy Head and Murray saw the white cliffs of England fast receding, he went below to his cabin and wept till he was exhausted. The voyage passed more pleasantly than he expected. He was a good sailor and there was much he could do for others not so fortunate. The wonderful changes in sky and sea interested him and supplied exciting experiences. They barely escaped a waterspout and one beautiful, moonlight night in mid-Atlantic, the vessel struck a whale with sufficient force to throw many of the passengers from their seats.

As he neared the shores of the New World he felt neither hope nor fear. He had no plans and no friends in America to lend a helping hand, having refused several letters of introduction because they would defeat his purpose of solitude. He had brought with him some money, much clothing, many letters written by his wife and a Bible. He felt himself rich.

When the ship was within three days of New York, they bespoke a vessel bound for England whose captain was questioned by the owner of the *Hand-in-Hand* about trade conditions in America. He was told there was a ready market for goods in Philadelphia but that New York was still bound to a non-importation agreement. Immediately the captain of the *Hand-in-Hand* received orders to change his course to Philadelphia. The pilot, whom they took on board two days later, flatly contradicted the previous information and, not knowing which to believe, the merchant decided to continue to Philadelphia to find out the truth for himself. If the pilot was correct he could then proceed to New York with all possible dispatch.

They sailed up the beautiful Delaware on a perfect September day. The scene to those who had been many weeks out of sight of land was especially enchanting. They went ashore for corn and fruit and Mr. Murray was surprised to see a woman in a log house dressing a duck for dinner. Ducks in London were a sign of opulence. Also, the well-laden peach trees in her garden astonished and delighted him. At

Philadelphia he was still further amazed to find a city of such size and appearance. His opinions of the New World were rapidly changing.

The Captain feared it was a disappointment not to land in New York. Mr. Murray assured him that all places were alike to him and asked to be recommended to a private lodging. When nothing satisfactory could be secured the captain suggested that Mr. Murray go by land to New York, but the stage which ran only at infrequent intervals had already gone. It was then decided that he remain on the vessel which was to sail for New York the next morning. He was the only passenger, the others having left at Philadelphia.

When they supposed themselves just outside New York harbor they ran into a dense fog. The Captain hailed a sloop he saw indistinctly through the mist and asked the distance from Sandy Hook. Understanding the answer to be seven miles, instead of seventy, they kept on their course and very shortly found themselves among the breakers. The vessel touched upon a sand bar but passed safely over. When the fog lifted, as suddenly as it had shut

---

down, the *Hand-in-Hand* was nearly on shore and the anchors were hastily lowered to keep her from drifting. They were in a little bay on the Jersey coast called Cranberry Inlet, at what is now Good Luck. The sloop was anchored near them.

At first the captain feared they were hopelessly grounded but by removing part of the cargo to the sloop which was hired for the purpose, the *Hand-in-Hand* was able to cross the bar next morning at high tide. The captain signaled the sloop to follow, but before she could do so the wind shifted and she was left in the inlet.

Mr. Murray was on the sloop, the captain having, with many apologies, asked him to remain there the night before, as the cargo was too valuable to be left to the care of common sailors. There were no provisions on board, so locking the hatches, Mr. Murray and the men went on shore in search of supplies.

There was a small tavern where the crew stopped for refreshments, but Mr. Murray wandered on through the woods till he came to a single log house. At the door was a girl cleaning a fresh fish which he offered to buy. She refused to sell, telling

him he could get plenty at the next house. He pointed to a substantial dwelling just visible in a wood and asked if that was the place.

"Oh, no," she replied, "that is the meeting house. Pass that and a little farther on you will come to the house I mean."

Mr. Murray's amazement knew no bounds. Wonders would never cease in this New World. Here was a good sized meeting house set in dense woods! What possible need of it could there be in such a wilderness?

He followed the girl's directions and soon came upon the second house, before which was a large pile of fish of various sorts. At a little distance stood a tall, rough looking man, who received him with great courtesy. On learning Mr. Murray's errand, he told him to help himself, even sending a servant to the tavern with the fish, but firmly refusing any pay. Since he had taken the fish from the water for nothing, others should have them just as freely, he said. Mr. Murray declined his invitation to supper, saying he must return to see that the sailors were cared for properly.

---

"Then," said the stranger, "come back and spend the night with me; you will be better accommodated than at the tavern."

Mr. Murray gratefully accepted and on his return found a cheerful fire burning on the hearth and received a cordial if singular welcome from his host.

"Come, my friend," said he, drawing up a chair for Mr. Murray, "I am glad you are here for I have been expecting you a long time and have much to say to you."

"I do not understand. What do you mean?" asked Murray in surprise.

By way of reply, his host, whose name he had learned was Thomas Potter, told the story of his life. How his early days had been spent on a man-of-war from which he had run away: how he had constructed a sawmill and increased his farm lands. Everything to which he put his hand had prospered, though he was a man of no education, not being able to either read or write. He had no children to inherit his wealth and because God had blessed his undertakings he determined to build a church for His worship. He refused to allow his neighbors to share the expense.

"The Lord has given me enough to do this work *alone*," he told them, "and what he has put in my heart to do, I will do."

Then some one asked, "Who will be your preacher?"

"The God who has put it into my heart to build this house will send me a preacher," he replied, "and a very different one from those we have ever known. He will not contradict himself but will preach the truth as it is in Jesus."

"When the house was finished," he told Mr. Murray, "the Baptists applied for it. 'If you can prove to me that God Almighty is a Baptist,' I answered, 'you may have it.' I said the same to the Quakers and Presbyterians. Firmly believing that all mankind were equally dear to God, I declared that all should be equally welcome in the house which I had built."

Mr. Potter's friends prophesied that a preacher with views similar to his own would never appear. By and by these same friends laughed as they asked him, "Where is the preacher of whom you spoke?" The reply was always the same. "He will by and by make his appearance."

"Now," continued Mr. Potter, leaning



toward Mr. Murray, his eyes glowing in the firelight, "When I saw your vessel on shore I heard a voice say to me 'In that vessel, Potter, is the preacher you have been watching for.' I not only heard the voice but believed it, and when you came to my door and asked for fish, I heard the same voice repeat, 'This is the man I have sent to preach in your meeting house.'"

"I cannot understand it! What could you see in me to make you think me a preacher?" exclaimed Mr. Murray.

"What could I *see* when you were in the vessel?" responded Mr. Potter. "I tell you it is not what I *saw* or *see* but what I *feel* that makes me sure."

Mr. Murray was amazed and exceedingly troubled. Long they sat in silence, broken only by the soft dropping from the logs. The firelight played on the great beams of the room and on the faces of the two men, the one bronzed and weather-beaten but alight with inward fire, the other young, sensitive, and shadowed by trouble.

"You are deceived," Mr. Murray at last exclaimed vehemently. "I am only a

broken-hearted man come to find peaceful retirement in America. I shall never preach here nor anywhere else."

"Do you not feel that God has especially shown you his truth?"

"I trust he has."

"Then how dare you hide it from others? You cannot say that you have never preached?"

"No, but I never shall again. Furthermore, I have no time even if I had the spirit. I am here in charge of valuable goods and must sail for New York to relieve the anxiety of the owner as soon as there is a favorable wind."

"The wind," responded his new friend, "will never change, sir, till you have delivered to us in that meeting house a message from God."

Mr. Murray relapsed into anxious thought, his eyes on the fire. The more he reflected, the more he wished he had never left England.

Mr. Potter eagerly watched his guest's changing face which revealed the inward conflict. At last Mr. Murray rose abruptly and begged to be shown to his room.

"Before you go, will you not lead the family in prayer?" asked Mr. Potter.

"Willingly," replied Mr. Murray.

At the door of the chamber, Mr. Potter grasped his hand, saying gravely, "Think over well all I have said."

The request was unnecessary. Mr. Murray could think of nothing else. In great distress, he spent most of the night either on his knees in prayer or walking the floor. If it was not God's leading which had brought him through a series of accidents into an insignificant inlet which had never before harbored a vessel the size of the *Hand-in-Hand* it was at least a curious coincidence.

The idea of appearing before people to preach, of making a public exhibition of himself, was to his desolate heart intolerable. He knew how Rely had been persecuted in England, and the contempt and disaster which had been heaped upon himself. If he preached Universal Redemption in this New World, he must face *alone* the united opposition of the clergy. He had suffered enough. He felt there was no fight left in him. To be let alone was all he asked. If it was indeed God's will

that he preach, he was willing to make the personal sacrifice, but would God have chosen a broken reed as his instrument? It occurred to him to take the shifting of the wind as a sign. Should it change, he would go. The long hours of the night dragged painfully away and the next morning he felt sick in mind and body.

The next few days were days of struggle. Mr. Potter was not easy to resist. To him every event in Mr. Murray's life which had led to his seeking the New World, every failure of the captain to carry out his purpose, had been a divine leading to bring his preacher to Good Luck. Toward the end of the week, Mr. Potter asked if Mr. Murray would not at least consent to preach for him and his neighbors the following Sunday in the meeting house. Seeing only the tavern and one other house in the thick woods, Mr. Murray inquired whom he meant by neighbors.

"Oh, there is no trouble about neighbors," said Mr. Potter. "In a radius of twenty miles, we can gather more than seven hundred people."

When Saturday morning came and no change of wind, Mr. Potter begged to be

allowed to send the servants to give notice of a meeting the next day. Mr. Murray would not permit it.

"If the wind changes this afternoon, I shall still go," he said.

No one knows what he suffered in this conflict between duty and inclination. As evening approached, he reluctantly consented to allow Mr. Potter to dispatch his men on horseback to announce a Sunday service. They rode until ten that night, spreading the news far and wide.

Mr. Murray could not sleep. During the long hours before dawn he tried in vain to decide on some plan of discourse for the next day, and at last determined to trust in Christ's promise to his disciples, "It shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall say." His inspiration should be another sign. If God put no words in his mouth, he was not His chosen courier.

The next morning, the thirtieth of September, 1770, dawned clear and beautiful. The household was early astir and Mr. Potter, confident that the dream of his life was about to be realized, went jubilantly about the preparations for the day's service. Very different were Mr. Murray's

feelings; he awaited the hour with nervous dread.

Soon the thud of horses' hoofs on the soft green turf broke the Sabbath stillness. From all directions the people began to approach. Some arrived by boat from along the shore, but mostly they were on horseback, the wives and sweethearts on pillions behind their men. Down the cool green forest trails they came, and along the winding lanes between the ripened harvest fields. Many had been obliged to leave home at daybreak, but the lives of these country folk were not so full that they were unwilling to make sacrifice to hear the word of the Lord. They filled the meeting house. They crowded the doorway and the windows left open to admit the fresh sea air.

It was a silent, reverential company that Mr. Murray faced when he ascended the small pulpit. Directly beneath him sat Mr. Potter, tears streaming down his sunburned cheeks, his face glowing with faith and joy.

Of that first Universalist sermon to be preached in America there is no record, but we *do* know that the God he trusted in-

spired him. Not only did he greatly move his hearers, but he preached the cloud from his own soul as well. When he returned to the house Mr. Potter caught him in his arms, exclaiming, "Now, I am willing to depart. I will praise the Lord, for he has sent me my heart's desire."

The people poured into the house from the church, eager to greet the new preacher. Mr. Potter shook the hand of each one, saying fervently, "This is the happiest day of my life. There is the minister God has promised to send me."

Mr. Murray was overcome with emotion and breaking away from those who thronged about him, he hurried to his room and dropped to his knees. "I am, O Lord God, as clay in Thy hand. Do with me as Thou wilt. If Thou hast brought me to a new world to make known the grace and blessing of a new covenant, be it so, but do not leave me for one instant for without Thee I can do nothing." So he prayed.

Immediately on his return to the company, a sailor approached and whispered, "The wind is fair, sir."

"Very well," replied Mr. Murray. "We will sail at once."

Mr. Potter was loath to part with him. "I am afraid when you get to New York you will forget the man to whom your Master sent you," he cried, warmly embracing him.

"There is nothing to make me stay," said Mr. Murray, "I know not a soul."

"Ah, my friend, there are many in New York who will love and admire you and will wish to keep you in the city," said Mr. Potter, shaking his head, "but I know you will keep your promise and return to me. In the meantime, may the God of heaven be with you."

Mr. Murray was too moved to answer and after a silent embrace hurried on board. There he found his generous friend had abundantly stocked the sloop with provisions for the voyage.

At sunset Mr. Potter stood on shore and watched the little vessel slip easily over the bar and disappear on the darkening ocean beyond. At its prow stood a solitary man who was never again to shrink from the task set him by his Master.



## Chapter VIII

### UNIVERSALISM AND MR. MURRAY JOURNEY TOGETHER

Very different from the anxious forebodings which had beset him on the previous voyages were Mr. Murray's feelings now. In his cabin the scenes of his life passed before him and he plainly saw the guiding hand of God. "This is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes," he exclaimed. The future looked bright. To return to Mr. Potter's generous friendship, to assist him in the fields and to preach before an eager band of followers on Sunday was a delightful prospect.

Safely arriving in New York at noon the next day, he delivered the sloop to the captain of the *Hand-in-Hand* and took lodgings till such time as he could get passage back to Cranberry Cove.

Before night the sailors had spread the news of the sermon preached at Mr. Potter's and many called to beg him to speak

in their city. They were so pressing that he yielded and preached in the Baptist meeting house. The crowd of hearers were deeply impressed and urged him to remain with them. This he told them was impossible because of his pledge to Mr. Potter. Then they promised to bestir themselves to find means for his speedy return to Good Luck, if he would continue to preach during his stay in town.

A week passed before they were able to secure him a passage. In the meantime he frequently preached and was cordially treated by the clergy, who, of course, regarded him as a Calvinist. He was cautious in presenting his views to couch them in Scriptural language upon which the hearer could put his own interpretation. This was in accordance with Relly's plan to gradually prepare the hearer for new truth, leading him gently along when his confidence had been gained.

Nothing was farther from Mr. Murray's thoughts at this time than a desire to found a new sect. He had no wish to antagonize the established churches. Indeed, he was in full sympathy with them on most points. He wished to brighten the old beliefs by

what he called the doctrine of hope. Later he was severely criticised for this course, being accused of hypocrisy, some of the clergy affirming he had gained access to their pulpits by false pretenses.

On his return, there was a hearty welcome awaiting him at Good Luck, where he settled down happily as one of the Potter household. Winter was rapidly approaching and Mr. Potter was busy harvesting his fruit. It was a great delight to Mr. Murray to assist him in the fields for his love of farming was as keen as when he helped his grandmother in her Irish garden. Till he realized this, Mr. Potter objected vigorously. He wished his guest to devote his time to study and offered him a generous salary for his Sunday preaching.

"Ah," replied Mr. Murray, "I can think best in the field. It requires little study to deliver simple, plain, gospel truth; to pervert the truth takes a vast deal of worldly wisdom."

One night before the open fire, Mr. Murray told Mr. Potter he was at last assured God had called him to preach. "But I am determined," he went on to say, "to make no gain of godliness. I have an abundance

of clothing, for I neither expect nor hope to live long. I will work in the fields with you and eat what you set before me, but I will neither accept any collection nor a regular salary. If it pleases the God who brought me here to let me remain till he calls me hence, I shall be the better pleased."

Mr. Potter tried to speak, but at first his emotions mastered him. Going across to Mr. Murray he took him warmly by the hand. "Can it be possible?" he said brokenly. "This is what I have always thought the ministers of God ought to be!"

"Every one," replied Mr. Murray, "is not free to do this. If I had a family, I should be worse than an infidel not to provide for them."

The relation between these two men was always ideal. The only cloud during these happy days was the increasing conviction in both that Mr. Murray would not be permitted to remain permanently at Good Luck. People continued to come twenty or thirty miles to the Sunday services and the fame of them spread rapidly. Invitations to preach in distant as well as near-by places poured in and could not long be

resisted by a man intent upon his Master's business.

His first visit was to a village eight miles away. In making a round of calls there one morning, he found a mother crying bitterly as she bent over the sleeping baby hugged close in her arms. With ready sympathy Mr. Murray asked what had happened. She told him between her sobs she felt it impossible that her eight children could all be elected to salvation. The thought that some of them were doomed to eternal torment from which nothing could save them had taken the joy from her life and she knew would one day unbalance her mind.

Picking up a Bible from the table, Mr. Murray opened it at random to the twenty-seventh psalm, third verse, "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord." With this as a text he gave her such unspeakable comfort that ten years afterward, when they chanced to meet, she exclaimed with gratitude, "Blessed be God, I have never had an unhappy thought of my children since that morning. I know they are God's."

One day a little vessel entered Cranberry

Inlet bearing an urgent invitation to Mr. Murray to preach again in New York. His passage had been engaged on the same ship and all expenses paid. It would have been impossible to refuse such a call, even if his feelings with regard to his mission on earth had not undergone a complete change. It now seemed to him selfish and unworthy to refuse to preach. "I am determined," he said, "never again to seek directly or indirectly for an open door, and never again to refuse entering any door that Providence shall open."

His reception in New York was enthusiastic. He had scarcely arrived when a subscription paper for the purpose of building him a meeting house was circulated. The response was ready and the entire amount was subscribed in a day. The people refused to take "No" for an answer, not being able to understand his preference for Good Luck. After hearing the story of the peculiar accidents leading to his arrival there, and his close relation with Mr. Potter, they unwillingly yielded to his strong feeling in the matter. A Baptist church was at his service during his stay and he preached to crowded houses.

In spite of the warm regard shown him, he gladly returned to Good Luck after a few weeks, his new friends going with him to the vessel, where they offered fervent prayers for his well being.

This was the beginning of those missionary journeys which extended over a period of four years, Portsmouth, N. H., being his northerly limit. Mr. Potter's, at Good Luck, seems to have been a kind of Bethany for him, to which he returned often for rest and refreshment.

As Mr. Murray had foreseen, it was soon rumored that his doctrines were heretical. He avoided, when possible, the proffered friendship of Baptist clergymen, knowing it would probably be short lived. One venerable judge, quite an oracle in his community, very early began to combat Mr. Murray's heresy. Since Murray would not listen to arguments that were not Scriptural, the old gentleman began to search the Bible for convincing texts. Shortly he confessed that he, and not Mr. Murray, was in error and became an ardent upholder of Universal Redemption.

Mr. Murray's popularity with the laymen, but more particularly his absolute

refusal to accept collections, increased the growing enmity of the clergy, who felt that such unworldly conduct put them at a disadvantage.

A visit to Philadelphia, after repeated invitations, produced stormy times in the Quaker city. There was no hint of coming trouble in his cordial reception. His solicitous friends vied with each other in supplying comforts and presented him with a good horse that his preaching trips might be taken with greater convenience.

He had an immediate falling out on doctrinal points with a prominent Baptist minister who had requested him to preach in his pulpit. The invitation was not withdrawn, but when Mr. Murray reached the parsonage before service, he found a goodly number assembled, including a young candidate for the ministry. On his entrance the clergyman arose, cast a look of anger and scorn upon him and without a word of greeting, took the young candidate by the hand and led him from the house into the church, leaving Mr. Murray still standing by the door. Good manners seem not to have been an adjunct of religion in those days.



Although this insult made warm friends for Mr. Murray, every church in the city was soon closed to him. His followers were allowed to engage a clubhouse called Bachelors' Hall, some miles out, the authorities saying they wished to keep the new doctrine at least at cannon shot from the city.

His private controversies were endless. One Baptist minister told Mr. Murray that he walked nine miles every Sunday to preach.

"How many in the congregation?" asked Mr. Murray.

"About one hundred."

"How many of the hundred do you suppose are elected to everlasting life?" continued Mr. Murray.

"I cannot tell."

"Fifty do you think?"

"Oh, no, nor twenty."

"Ten perhaps?"

"There may be ten."

"Can these lost do anything which will help their situation?"

"They might as well try to pull the stars from heaven."

"Can your preaching help them?"

"Certainly not. Every sermon they hear will sink them deeper in damnation."

"And so my friend you walk nine miles every Sunday to sink ninety persons out of a hundred in never-ending misery?" exclaimed Mr. Murray with fine scorn.

The storm of opposition was now gathering in many directions. A few clouds were visible even at his beloved Good Luck, but Mr. Potter's friendship remained unshaken. Mr. Murray cheerily observed that while his enemies were very malignant they were generally at a distance and his friends who were very cordial were at his elbow. He could have gone his way with much less care had it not been for those well-meaning but pestilential friends who "felt he ought to know what so and so said." They reported with dispatch and precision much that would otherwise have escaped him. The clergy were almost always his enemies. The open opposition of declared foes, however bitter, he could well endure, but the hypocritical infidelity of friends wrung his heart.

On one occasion when on a preaching tour in the neighborhood, he was invited out to breakfast and was surprised to

find many other guests, including a Baptist clergyman who had been his inveterate foe. The clergyman at once began a discussion and became so angry that he rushed about the room quite wildly exclaiming, "Gibberish! gibberish!" after Mr. Murray's remarks. It was a distress to Mr. Murray that a pretended friend should have exposed him to such an unprofitable encounter. "As usual," he said, "this attack drew me nearer God."

At another place he was asked to dinner by an apparently cordial friend. They had a long and intimate talk on doctrine, but no sooner was Mr. Murray out of sight than his host ordered a horse and rode about telling jubilantly how he had outwitted Mr. Murray's "cunning," and obtained a true knowledge of his principles.

In the autumn of 1773 Mr. Murray determined to fulfill a long deferred promise to visit Newport, Rhode Island. The chilly evenings and mornings on the journey made him feel the need of an overcoat. In accordance with his habit he kept silent, feeling sure that a well-to-do friend in New York would at once observe his need and supply it. The day before he left

Brunswick, where he had stopped to preach, a stranger came to him with patterns of cloth, asking him to make a choice for a great coat. He refused to tell who had sent him.

"You need not," said Mr. Murray. "It is God my Father who has put it into some one's heart to do this." The coat was delivered promptly next morning before Mr. Murray left. On reaching New York he learned that the man whom he had expected to make the gift was no longer his friend.

While on a side trip in New Jersey he was told that Mrs. Trinbath, at whose house he had spent that last happy evening in Ireland, was in New York. She had deserted her husband and children and had fled to America with a private in the English army. The shock and grief had unbalanced her husband's mind and finally killed him.

Mr. Murray was always ready to help the distressed or to reclaim the wrongdoer. Intent on this he returned to New York next day, feeling sure he could induce Mrs. Trinbath to return to her mother and children. He set on foot inquiries for her

whereabouts. The soldier with whom she had run away saw Mr. Murray walking with the major of his regiment, and supposed him to be Mr. Trimbath, of whose death they had not heard. He hurried home to warn Mrs. Trimbath and when Mr. Murray arrived, the house was empty. Nothing he could say or do would convince the neighbors that he was not the injured husband and he was overwhelmed with unwelcome pity. He left a letter at the lodgings to prove his identity, but Mrs. Trimbath supposed it a trick of her husband's to gain admittance. His foes distorted this incident, affirming that he was Mr. Trimbath masquerading as a religious teacher and that his wife had run away with the soldier to escape cruel treatment. The scandal became serious and Mr. Murray was so distressed at such an outcome to his well meant efforts that his friends appealed to the military authorities to have the woman produced at a meeting of reliable witnesses which they called together. Mrs. Trimbath grew hysterical when she saw Mr. Murray approaching, and without stopping to look, cried out that he was her husband and fainted away.

When she had recovered sufficiently to be brought face to face with him, she acknowledged her mistake with much sorrow, but refused to listen to any plea for her return to Ireland. Notwithstanding his public vindication, the results of this unfortunate incident were far reaching. Mr. Murray, writing of the matter, said sadly, "There was not a thousandth part of the pains taken to publish the truth as had been taken to spread the slander. It was the still, small voice of friendship which proclaimed my innocence; the slander had a thousand tongues."

These various persecutions were hard to bear but they aroused great curiosity to see the man so talked about, and hundreds flocked to hear him.

## Chapter IX

### “THE LORD WILL PROVIDE”

This incident closed, Mr. Murray continued his journey to Newport, stopping on the way to preach at New London, Norwich and Preston. Strictly adhering to his decision to accept no collections, he was entirely dependent on the hospitality of friends or chance companions. His genial manners gained entertainment for him even among strangers, and neither on this trip nor any other was he ever at a loss for help.

He left Preston on horseback in company with a Newport minister named Hopkins. The distance to the ferry was thirty or forty miles and they fell into controversy by the way. Very likely the dust and heat with the natural fatigue of a long horseback journey had its effect on the clerical disposition. At all events, it is certain that the temper of Mr. Hopkins rose higher

and higher as the sun mounted the heavens, and it is likely that Mr. Murray's did also. They reached the ferry with no very friendly feeling and had a final tilt on board before parting.

"Over there, sir," said Mr. Hopkins, waving his arm majestically across the water toward Newport, "is my meeting house; near by is my dwelling and my friends are multiplied."

"I have no home, meeting house, nor friends," responded Mr. Murray, "yet before I leave that place I expect to have more than one home and many friends."

Arrived at the other side, Mr. Hopkins ignored the laws of hospitality which in those days of few inns demanded that he entertain Mr. Murray at least for the night, and contented himself with pointing out a small shop where he suggested directions for obtaining a lodging might be obtained, then rode away without waiting to see the outcome.

As it was already dusk, it was necessary to speedily find a place for the night, so Mr. Murray dismounted and bridle in hand flung open the door of the little shop, and asked to be directed to the best inn for his



horse, always his first consideration on the road.

The solemn proprietor invited him in for a cup of tea and summoned the stable boy to take care of his horse meanwhile. The absence of a woman and the gloomy looks and heavy sighs of his host led Mr. Murray to feel that he had recently suffered some great affliction, probably the death of the wife, and he was all sympathy until the man incidentally mentioned that the supposedly deceased lady was away on a visit.

By questions the shopkeeper drew from Mr. Murray the story of the day and of the parting with Mr. Hopkins.

"There is not another person in town who would have been so lacking," exclaimed the man indignantly. "You must stay with me to-night, and your horse shall have special care. The moment you came to my door it was as though some one said, 'Here is a preacher, take kind notice of him,' and I determined to obey the impulse."

"It was a bright ending to a dark day and showed me my Master still cared for me," wrote Mr. Murray.

His host invited a number of friends to spend the evening. It was such a company as would be likely to put a wet blanket on the most cheerful temper. After the introductions there was silence, interrupted only by the heavy sighs of the guests. Mr. Murray's thoughts flew back to his Irish home and the old London days when he too regarded a long face as a delight to the Lord, and he waited with patience for the spirit to move these very religious gentlemen to speak, for they evidently were *very* religious.

After a long interval, a sepulchral voice broke the stillness to request Mr. Murray to relate his "experience" that they might judge if he were "a child of God." He willingly complied and, at the conclusion of his story, there was another profound silence, punctuated by more sighs. Then one gentleman announced that Mr. Murray could not be a child of God, his experience not being of the true kind. Another insisted he assuredly was, because he personally had felt him to be during the testimony. The others took sides and the company seemed hopelessly divided, but they agreed to ask for the use of Mr. Hopkins'

meeting house that they might have opportunity to hear him preach. Remembering his parting with that gentleman, Mr. Murray thought it prudent to refuse to accept any favor at his hands. It was then suggested he speak in that room. Mr. Murray objected.

"You are very difficult," said one man irritably, "and it is not likely that you will be offered any other place."

"I am not anxious about that," replied Mr. Murray. "If God wishes me to preach, He will provide the place."

"Perhaps God directed us to make these offers."

"Not so," said Mr. Murray, "else I should have received His message to preach."

The company departed, declaring Mr. Murray very odd. One man lingered and, with the master of the house, spent the greater part of the night in conversation with Mr. Murray, who declared the conference so inspiring that he felt no weariness in spite of his long hours in the saddle.

Next morning, cheerful, though he had only a few shillings in his pocket, he wan-

dered about seeing the town till noon. During his absence a committee called to ask him to preach next morning for Dr. Stiles, who was out of town. In the evening, when they came for an answer, the chairman took Mr. Murray home with him to be his guest during his stay. It was the beginning of a lasting friendship and for many years this house was his occasional home.

The people were greatly pleased with the Sunday service and recalled a vote against week-day evening lectures, since Mr. Murray wished the laboring people to hear the gospel without losing either time or money. He preached every evening till Dr. Stiles' return. That good man received him very coldly and refused to allow him to assist in the service, to the disappointment of every one.

On Monday morning Mr. Murray was told that a minister from New York who had arrived the night before had given him "a horrid character," so said the messenger. Mr. Murray went before breakfast to confront the man, but found he had already left town. The report spread like fire; it was the common topic on the parade.

Mr. Murray demanded that the accusations be investigated. He was charged with the following misdemeanors: first, that he had formerly labored for his living; second, that he was a married man; third, that he had children; fourth, that he had been an actor; fifth, that he had sung songs. Such ridiculous charges showed how blameless was the life against which determined and remorseless foes could bring no greater accusations.

This attack created great indignation in his behalf. As a public acknowledgment of their sympathy, a committee of influential members of Dr. Stiles' congregation waited upon him, requesting him to lecture in their church that evening.

From Newport he went to Providence, where he preached for the Rev. Mr. Snow to crowded houses, and his doctrines were well received. It had been his intention to continue to Boston but the season was now too far advanced. As it was, winter came before he reached Good Luck, the calls to stop by the way were so frequent.

There was a brief season of happy intercourse with Mr. Potter, then, in January, 1773, came another urgent call to visit

Philadelphia, which he accepted because of the opportunity it afforded to meet visiting strangers who spread the news of salvation as they returned to their homes.

While in Philadelphia he received several invitations from a Maryland doctor to visit him. The man was so persistent Mr. Murray, with reluctance, consented to go. When his horse was brought to the door for the journey it occurred to him that he was literally without money. For a moment only he hesitated, then his faith asserted itself. If God wished him to take this journey, somehow He would provide for it. Thrusting his foot in the stirrup, he was about to mount, when a gentleman crossing the street called to ask if he was traveling alone and where.

"To a town in Maryland about eighty miles from here," replied Mr. Murray.

"If I had known it an hour ago I would have gone with you," said the gentleman.

"It is not too late now. I will wait for you," responded Mr. Murray.

In less than an hour they were off. The new friend insisted on playing the host and at Chester they dined luxuriously. In the middle of the afternoon they stopped to

rest. "Here I had planned to leave you," said the gentleman, "but I am unwilling to do so."

At dusk they reached Newark and Mr. Murray's companion took him to the house of one of his friends to pass the night. Mr. Murray slept serenely, although he expected to journey on alone next day without a cent in his pocket. In the morning his new friend bade him an affectionate farewell and started home. After breakfast Mr. Murray ordered his horse and was about to ride off when the master of the house, with great embarrassment, asked him to come in again for a moment.

"I have been impelled all the morning to do this thing," he said, "and now I see you about to take your leave, I can no longer resist it. Will you accept this trifle?" and he handed Mr. Murray enough money to bring him to the end of his journey. "If you do not need it yourself, you may meet some one who does."

With tears of gratitude Mr. Murray told him of his penniless condition, and of his faith that the Lord would provide. The man was overjoyed to be of service and pressed Mr. Murray to accept more.

"I have enough now for my present needs; more would be burdensome," responded Mr. Murray, and rode away with a light heart. The blessing of God was surely upon this journey, for the way had been made clear.

That same evening he reached the home of the physician at whose invitation he had come. Knowing the man to have a large fortune, he was astonished at the poverty of his dress and home. Also, he was disappointed in his conversation, which was that of a self-righteous, penurious, Calvinist. Mr. Murray determined to take the first opportunity to inform him of his different views, feeling that an early parting would be best for both.

There was no guest chamber and he was obliged to occupy the same bed with the Doctor, who continued to talk after the candle was extinguished. Mr. Murray soon informed him of his belief in Universal Redemption and then, in the darkness, calmly awaited the bitter tirade which he felt sure would follow. It was quite in the line of probability that the irate doctor would turn him out of bed and out of doors.



There was a long pause and then the Doctor spoke.

"You have nothing to fear from me," he said. "The things of which you speak have never before entered my head or heart, but so far from being revolted, nothing would give me more unutterable joy than to be assured of their truth."

Mr. Murray was jubilant. "What assurance do you wish?" he asked.

"No more proof than a 'thus saith the Lord,' " responded the Doctor.

"During the rest of the night," said Mr. Murray, "I preached the gospel according to the Scriptures, and it pleased God to furnish my mind with such testimony from the Bible that I went on from Genesis to Revelation until morning dawned upon us."

The Doctor was completely won by this midnight eloquence.

"I had never seen so great a change in any one in so short a time," said Mr. Murray. "He was like a new man."

Although of miserly habits, the Doctor had given four hundred pounds towards building a meeting house, and he was ex-

tremely mortified when he could not obtain permission for Mr. Murray to preach in it. The Presbytery had given orders that no one should enter the pulpit who had not a letter from them. Nor could he gain entrance for him elsewhere in the neighborhood. The Doctor urged Mr. Murray to remain in the town, promising to build him as fine a meeting house as there was in the country.

"I will devote ten of the forty thousand pounds I possess to it, if you will stay," he said.

Mr. Murray appreciated his devotion, but told him the offer of his whole estate would be no temptation. His mind was at that time solemnly impressed that, as a courier of God, he must not tarry long by the way.

The townspeople were astonished at the great change in the Doctor. He was a man of uncommon ability and had developed into a powerful speaker, though formerly morose and somewhat taciturn. He grew liberal with his money, not only in the cause of religion, but to the needy. Toward Mr. Murray, whose clothing from much travel had grown shabby, he dis-

played a fatherly care and caused him to be fitted to a fine broadcloth suit.

Mr. Murray stayed some weeks with the Doctor and the Sunday before his departure was engaged to preach at an Episcopal church six miles away. On Saturday evening a piercing wind from the northwest was followed by a severe frost and the next day, February 14, 1773, was the coldest in Mr. Murray's experience. He could not be persuaded to give up his appointment and rode the six miles on horseback, accompanied by an ardent admirer. They were so absorbed in conversation as to be entirely oblivious to the weather and the friend declared he wished they might ride on forever. It was too cold to use the church and the people assembled in the schoolhouse, where a huge hearth fire kept them from freezing.

The last night of his stay, like the first, was spent in discussion with the Doctor and their parting next day was most affecting.

"God forever bless you and make the way plain before you. I am an old man and we shall probably never meet again in this world, but we shall spend eternity together," said the Doctor, putting into

Mr. Murray's hand sufficient gold to supply him till he reached Good Luck.

Mr. Murray made an involuntary expression of astonishment at the amount of the gift. "You are not more surprised than I am," said the Doctor. "It is the Lord's doing and my former ways are abhorrent to me."

On his journey back he stopped to preach at Newark and Wilmington, reaching Philadelphia in good health and high spirits. During the rest of the spring, the whole of the succeeding summer, and part of the autumn, till October, 1773, his time was divided between Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York. His journeys were for the most part on horseback and he often regretted the slowness of his progress, giving as his excuse, the warmth of his friends and the warmth of the weather.

About this time, Mr. Still, a Baptist clergyman, wrote an elaborate letter, full of slanders, against Mr. Murray, which he read wherever he went, and also caused to be printed and sent about the country. It was a stab in the dark. Mr. Murray never saw the letter nor had any chance to defend himself against its charges, but

was often painfully conscious of its consequences.

On the tenth of October he had the opportunity to return to Newport by sailing vessel, and there was great rejoicing among his friends. Believing that peace was for the good of all, he sent word to Dr. Stiles that he did not intend to attempt to occupy his pulpit. There was no need on this visit to sue either strangers or enemies for favors. His prophecy to Mr. Hopkins was abundantly fulfilled; he had "many homes and many friends." His admirers were numbered among all sects and classes, even the Jews being friendly. The Governor granted him the use of the statehouse and he preached also at the prison and often for Mr. Kelly. Many were eager to erect a meeting house and only awaited his promise to remain permanently with them before starting the work. That promise they failed to get. Mr. Murray still insisted his mission was to sow the seed, leaving others to reap. Not being able to carry out their plan, the people endeavored by private gifts to add to Mr. Murray's comfort.

While in New Jersey he had published a

book called "A Specimen of Apostolic Preaching." It consisted of selections from the writings of Rely, and was printed at Burlington, New Jersey. To defray the expense, Mr. Murray had sold his horse. When this came to the knowledge of his Newport friends they promptly presented him with another.

From Newport he went to East Greenwich, stopping with his good friend Varnum, afterward General Varnum of the Continental Army. Mr. Murray never measured his labors by the going down of the sun nor by his physical infirmities and, though ill during his stay, he spent one night in discussion with Judge Potter, who ever afterward spoke of him with great affection.

Once more he planned going as far as Boston but hesitated to make the start. He was still undecided, when he was introduced to a Mrs. Hubbard from that town, who urged him to go, and invited him to make his home with her during his stay. Finding he would, in all probability, reach Boston before her return to the city, she gave him a letter to her husband.

Mr. Murray stopped to preach at Paw-

tuxet and then went on to Providence. Immediately on his arrival, he was invited to spend the evening with Mr. Snow, with whom he had been friends on his former visit. He found the parlor nearly filled by members of the congregation. Proceedings began with the usual long and solemn silence, which Mr. Snow finally ended by saying, "We realize that by far the greater part of this town are anxious to hear you and we suppose your friends will apply for our meeting house. Since your last visit, we have heard strange reports of you—for one thing—that you believe all mankind will be saved. I have thought proper to call together certain of my church members that they may examine you and determine if it is proper to open our church doors."

After many questions and much discussion, Mr. Snow called the company to order. "Well, my friends, you know the reason of my bringing you together; you can now determine respecting Mr. Murray's again entering our pulpit. I would have you speak freely."

One gentleman said it was the most convenient place and the people wished to

hear; he could see no reason why Mr. Murray should be shut out. Another objected, saying his conscience would not allow him to consent. A third wisely said, "The people will go to hear him *wherever he preaches*. If he is wrong, he cannot contaminate the house. I most devoutly bless God I have been present. I have received more light than I ever did before."

The majority agreed with the last speaker. Mr. Murray assured them he had no intention of preaching anything but Christ Jesus, and him crucified *for every human being*. It was agreed that he should be allowed to use the church, and so with the consent of pastor and people, he preached again and again to large congregations.

When he left, Dr. Hughs, a prominent member of the church, said to him, "I rejoice that you dare be honest. How long it will continue I know not. At present you are boldly facing danger without fear. Continue, I beseech you, to declare unmixed truth, though all men should be against you."







**The Sargent-Murray-Gilman House, Gloucester, Mass.**

## Chapter X

### MASSACHUSETTS HEARS THE NEW GOSPEL

On the twenty-sixth of October, 1773, he took a seat in the stage for Boston, and late in the evening of the same day arrived in town. He had a letter to Mr. Hubbard and another to Major Paddock, but was unwilling to disturb strangers at so late an hour, and was undecided what to do. One after another the travelers were dropped till he was alone in the coach. As the driver received no directions from his solitary passenger, he very civilly asked, "Where will you be set down, sir?"

"Put me down at some decent tavern," said Mr. Murray.

While the coachman deliberated, a young man approached and asked, "Is Mr. John Murray in the coach?"

"I am he," said Mr. Murray, putting his head from the window; "how can I serve you?"

"By allowing me to serve *you*, sir," responded the young man, doffing his hat and laughing. "My mother, Mrs. Hubbard, wrote to father to be on the watch for you. I am to take you home with me."

"Thus," said Mr. Murray, "was I met in Boston by the good Providence of God."

From the Hubbards he received great kindness. Major Paddock was less cordial but very civil and introduced him to others who proved valuable friends.

On the evening of Saturday, October 30, 1773, Mr. Murray preached for the first time in Boston in the hall of the factory, which was a large building opposite the place where the Park Street Church now stands. The following evening, Sunday, he preached again and the congregation was too large for the hall. His text was Zachariah, ix, 9.

Monday night he spoke in the parlors of Mr. Peck, who had hospitably insisted on entertaining him during his stay in Boston. Mr. Peck's residence was on Merchants Row. The friendship of this gentleman, whose upright dealings had won for him the title of "Honest Peck, the hatter," did much to advance Mr. Murray's cause.

The news of his arrival in Boston traveled to Newburyport and a number of influential citizens sent one of their number, a Mr. Little, up to town commissioned to bring Mr. Murray back with him. Shortly they traveled down together and Mr. Murray was surprised to find a large crowd gathered at the coach office to welcome him.

Mr. Parsons, the clergyman in whose pulpit he was to preach, seemed a little disturbed that he presented no ministerial credentials, but after Mr. Murray's first sermon he never failed to conduct him to the pulpit and sit beside him throughout the service—a strong proof of personal approval.

As a guest of Mr. Little, Mr. Murray occupied the chamber that had formerly been Mr. Whitefield's. That famous preacher had died in Newburyport but a short while before and his admirers often commented on Mr. Murray's likeness to him, both in appearance and in preaching. Their approbation would have been less enthusiastic had they known that Mr. Murray believed the glad tidings he preached applied to *all* men, and not merely to the elect. Realizing this, he built no hopes on

the continued approval of these people, but followed the policy he had tried in other places of gaining confidence and interest before proclaiming Universal Redemption.

"I still hold with Mr. Rely," he wrote, "that the gradual dawn of light will eventually prove more beneficial to mankind than the sudden burst of meridian day. Thus I content myself with proclaiming the truth in Scriptural language."

He was two weeks in Newburyport and on the tenth of November, 1773, left for Portsmouth, where he was cordially received and his various personal needs amply provided for. The largest church in town was none too large to hold his congregations.

After a flying return visit to Newburyport he went back to Boston on Wednesday, November 17. There he found his friends literally with their Bibles in their hands, searching the Scriptures for proofs of Universal Salvation. Mr. Murray compiled a list to show where certain passages might be found. "Proofs that all the inspired writers were Universalists," was the heading placed above it.

Mr. Peck, to whose home he went, re-

ceived him as a returning son and his wife begged Mr. Murray to write to England that in the New World he had found a second mother.

There was in the city a small body of people calling themselves Deists, whom Mr. Murray addressed several times, often arguing points of difference with their leader after the discourse. "Election" frequently came up for discussion.

"I admit," said Mr. Murray, on one of these occasions, "that many are 'elected,' that is, are especially called of God. A governor is elected by a commonwealth, a council, senators and representatives are elected, but are the rest of the people therefore consigned to perdition?"

His little audience enthusiastically applauded him, one of the number exclaiming, "The plan of salvation is worthy of God. We congratulate you, dear sir, as the ambassador of God."

The hall of the factory and Mr. Peck's parlors were now entirely too small for his audiences. Mr. Peck, as a leading member of Rev. Andrew Croswell's church, urged that he occupy that pulpit. As Mr. Croswell had not displayed much friendli-

ness, Mr. Murray consented with reluctance.

On Friday, November 26, he preached in Faneuil Hall, his text being, "If the son therefore make ye free, ye shall be free indeed." The following morning had been fixed for his departure and the audience crowded about him with affectionate farewells and entreaties for his speedy return. Many went with him to Mr. Peck's, where the rest of the night was spent in searching the Scriptures and in spiritual communion.

Saturday, Sunday and Monday Mr. Murray preached for Mr. Snow in Providence, and then began a leisurely journey through Connecticut and New York to Good Luck, which he did not reach until the last of January, 1774.

Of his stay in New London he wrote particularly, saying, "I delight to dwell upon the days I passed in New London." Then follow the names of those for whom and for whose children he asked God's special blessing because of their faith.

He remarked on this journey the increasing difficulty to get people to accept explanations couched in Scriptural language.



They were continually demanding, "Tell us in your own words what you believe."

On the ninth of April, 1774, he received "an affectionate and solemn call" to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, which he refused, still feeling his special work was to *spread* the gospel.

The spring and early summer was divided between Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York. At Philadelphia he spent much time in the prison with a number of men condemned to death, giving them comfort and help. "The proclamation of the tender mercies of God were more effectual than the thunders of Sinai," he wrote to a friend.

The twentieth of July he left New York for a preaching journey through Connecticut and Rhode Island. The zeal and affection of his friends along the way gave him great satisfaction.

On the sixteenth of August the Governor of Rhode Island sent a request that he preach that day from Mark xiv, 10. Mr. Murray complied and the Governor expressed warm approval of the sermon.

September 14, 1774, he again reached Boston, where his friends had been eagerly

expecting him, and gave him a royal reception. He remained throughout the autumn, preaching in the hall of the factory, at private houses and at Faneuil Hall. Once he attempted to speak in Mason's hall but the throng was so great that it was necessary to adjourn to more commodious quarters, even after the text had been given out.

Scurrilous bits referring to Mr. Murray now began to appear in the Boston papers. They all accused him of being a Rellyite. One of these items, coming to the notice of a little band of people in Gloucester who had read Relly's book and were already secretly in sympathy with its doctrine, they sent Mr. Winthrop Sargent, one of their number, to Boston to beg Mr. Murray to come to them. Mr. Sargent reached Boston on October 31, and shortly after, when his engagements permitted, Mr. Murray returned with him, staying nine days and preaching in the Baptist church.

Not since his arrival at Good Luck had he found such inspiriting conditions. Here the seed was already sown and flourishing. He said of this visit in a letter to a friend, "I had traveled from Mary-

land to New Hampshire without meeting a single individual who appeared to have the smallest idea of the truth as it is in Jesus, but here in this remote place, I have found a few people upon whom the light of the gospel has more than dawned."

Once more in Boston he yielded to the persuasions of Mr. Peck and other prominent people and occupied the pulpit of Mr. Croswell. This church, which had formerly belonged to the French Protestants, was located on the next lot east of that on which the second Universalist or old "School Street Church" afterward stood.

At the close of Mr. Murray's sermon, delivered in the meeting house on the second of November, the Rev. J. Bacon, pastor of the Old South Church, ascended the pulpit steps and warned the people against believing the false doctrine they had just heard.

"Now, I like this," exclaimed Mr. Murray, rising to his feet when the clergyman had finished. "No bush fighting here nor secret slander! I am so much gratified at this open dealing that it is with extreme reluctance I find it necessary to dissent from the gentleman in opinion."

---

With no uncertain terms he then replied to Mr. Bacon. When some in the audience would have checked the discussion, Mr. Murray begged that they be uninterrupted. The talk proceeded and ended with fairness and courtesy.

Vastly different were his encounters with Mr. Croswell. On the Wednesday evening after his return from Gloucester, while he was preaching in Mr. Croswell's pulpit, a quantity of water was thrown in the windows on the audience, and an egg which missed its mark was aimed at Mr. Murray. If these insults were not encouraged by Mr. Croswell they at least did not meet his disapproval.

The following day a slander against Mr. Murray was published in the paper over Mr. Croswell's signature, though he had previously promised not to make use of the press for any further attacks. Mr. Murray wisely made no printed response, but sent him a private letter, demanding that he be given a chance to vindicate himself at a public meeting in the School Street Church. The letter was no gentle effusion and greatly enraged Mr. Croswell, who promptly sent it back, declaring he would

have nothing further to do with Mr. Murray, "the apostate."

On the following Sunday evening, when Mr. Murray reached the meeting house, he found the congregation in an uproar and Mr. Croswell, with a number of violent adherents, upon the stairs of the pulpit blocking the way. Mr. Murray made no resistance, but turning to the congregation, requested that Mr. Croswell be heard with patient attention.

Instantly there was profound silence. Mr. Croswell went into the pulpit and delivered a violent denunciation of Mr. Murray, asserting that he was a disciple of Rely, a blasphemer who believed that all mankind would be saved. There was plenty of invective but nothing of argument in the harangue.

At its conclusion Mr. Croswell passed rapidly down the aisle as though the business of the evening was over. In vain Mr. Murray asked him to remain and hear his reply. Mr. Croswell did not even pause. Then once more Mr. Murray appealed to the breathless congregation to see justice done and forcibly detain Mr. Croswell. The departing clergyman, whose haste re-

sembled flight, was accordingly captured and placed in a pew.

Mr. Murray began his answer by expressing regret that self-defense demanded that he combat an old man and a minister from his own pulpit. The controversy between the two was hot and long and on Mr. Crosswell's part wholly lacking in dignity and Christian spirit. As a final taunt he cried, "Come, come, leave off hiding and tell these people in plain English that God loves them all."

"I will, sir," boldly replied Mr. Murray, "in as plain English as I can command. I am commissioned to say to every individual before me, that God loves you and that you are not to accept this declaration upon my bare word; you have the word of a God who cannot lie; who proclaims Himself loving unto every man; who has given you proof positive of His love; His love has preserved you from ten thousand dangers, given you ten thousand blessings. Your civil and religious liberties are blessed proofs of the love of your God. These manifestations are merely temporal but I am authorized to add, in plain English,

that God loves the soul and He has proved this love by the gift of His Son." As Mr. Murray continued in the same strain with increasing eloquence, Mr. Croswell came forth from the pew, mounted the pulpit and, in his efforts to stop the discourse, began kicking Mr. Murray's legs, pulling the skirt of his coat, and trying to shoulder him out of the pulpit. "Have done, have done," he cried. "You have said enough, enough!" The congregation had been previously displeased at Mr. Croswell's refusal to answer Mr. Murray's questions and their indignation was not lessened by this performance.

"Blessed be the name of the Lord," wrote Mr. Murray afterward, "for He not only gave me words to speak but did not suffer me to lose my self-control."

Next night the service was uninterrupted but on Sunday evening his enemies had sprinkled the church furnishings with asafœtida. Notwithstanding this, the place was packed with people, and Mr. Murray with difficulty reached the pulpit, which he found so soaked with the stuff, that he was nearly suffocated. Gasping, but deter-

mined, he proceeded with the service. "The God of my life was abundantly sufficient for me," he said.

Many times during the sermon a volley of stones was flung in the windows. They produced confusion and alarm in the congregation but no one was injured. At last a jagged stone, weighing about a pound and a half, was thrown in the window behind Mr. Murray, barely missing his head. Calmly he stooped to pick it up and, holding it aloft before the people, exclaimed, "This argument is solid and weighty, but not convincing."

From all parts of the house came cries of, "Pray, sir, leave the pulpit; your life is in danger."

"Be it so," he returned; "I am as ready and willing to go now as I shall be fifty years from now," and went on with his discourse.

Perhaps his courage shamed his enemies. At all events, for two or three evenings there were no disturbances, then the business of stoning him in the pulpit began again. This time his friends were so seriously alarmed that they formed a strong guard about him and conducted him home.



Certainly the elders of the church needed the spirit of love which Mr. Murray taught when they would stoop to so persecute a man of blameless life because he was affirming in their midst that a just God had not doomed two-thirds of their fellow beings to never-ending misery.

## Chapter XI

“ONE WHO NEVER TURNED HIS BACK”

“Simple duty hath no place for fear.”

WHITTIER.

On December 14, 1774, Mr. Murray again visited Gloucester. After his stormy encounters in Boston, the staunch faith and warm friendship of this little band of Rellyites was a divine blessing to him. He was persuaded to make Gloucester his permanent home but consented only when it was agreed that he should still be free to spend several months each year in missionary journeys. He lived happily with Mr. Sargent, an ardent admirer, and one of the influential men of the place, and would accept no salary, his simple needs being supplied as usual by his watchful friends. Every day the constantly increasing little company met, like the disciples of old, for prayer and praise.

“Here,” wrote Mr. Murray, “my God grants me rest from my toils; here I have a taste of heaven.”

For twenty years, till he removed to Boston in 1793, he lived at Gloucester, and it was the place where most of his pastoral labors were conducted.

These days of peace were but a breathing space before the next tempest. Gloucester was the first place in which he immediately announced his belief in final Redemption. He and his little band of workers were soon summoned before the church to give their reasons for absenting themselves from public worship. The usual result followed the investigation; Mr. Murray was no longer allowed to preach in the Baptist meeting house. Before long not only he, but seventeen influential people of the town, all his friends, were excommunicated.

The civil authorities also took action and he was summoned from bed at Mr. Sargent's, where he had been ill for some time, to answer to a new charge, conspiracy against the Colonies, the War of the Revolution being then in progress. The Committee of Safety chose to regard him as an English spy in the pay of Lord North. The accusation was not only absurd but particularly ungrateful and cruel.

In May, 1775, through his friendship with

General Greene and General Varnum, he had been appointed chaplain to a Rhode Island brigade stationed at Jamaica Plain. When Washington took command of the army at Cambridge, the other chaplains, all Mr. Murray's bitter enemies, presented a petition requesting his removal on account of his "pernicious doctrines" which, they asserted, were corrupting the morals of the soldiers. General Washington's answer was to forward to General Greene an order appointing Mr. Murray chaplain to three of the Rhode Island brigades instead of one. The commission sent to Mr. Murray provided for a liberal salary. It was returned to General Washington with a polite note of thanks, and the request that he be allowed to retain his post as volunteer only.

On reading the letter Washington observed, with reference to the refusal of the money, "Mr. Murray is a young man now; he will live to be old and repentance will be the companion of his age." He was a false prophet; never once did Mr. Murray regret his failure to accumulate wealth. He served the army faithfully till a serious attack of bilious fever compelled his re-

moval to Mr. Sargent's. His influence with the soldiers had been strong for good, even the officers remarking the change for the better in morals and manners.

Gloucester felt the effects of the war keenly, and no sooner was Mr. Murray able to leave the house than he undertook a journey in mid-winter to raise money to relieve the wants of the destitute women and children. General Washington and prominent army officers, as well as Mr. Murray's private friends, gave liberally, and the sum realized was a large one. It was wisely distributed by him and relieved much suffering.

This well-known service was ignored when, in February of the following year, 1777, the Committee of Safety brought its ridiculous charge. Failing to get him out of town as a heretic, his enemies undoubtedly thought to take advantage of the high-strung, patriotic temper of the people to work his ruin.

He was warned not to attend the meeting, as the few friends he had on the Committee could not be present. To shirk an encounter with a foe was never his policy, and, although almost too weak to stand, he

obeyed the summons and answered readily all manner of insulting questions about his past life. For his army record, he proudly referred them to his *friends*, General Washington and General Greene. He defied any one to find an act or word during his seven years' residence in the colonies which was not loyal. The Committee well knew his record but cared nothing for facts.

Though it was a severe winter and the roads almost impassable, the chairman demanded that he leave town, saying that the Committee would not be responsible for the violence of a mob.

"Sir," said Mr. Murray, "I feel such a confidence of innocence here," putting his hand on his heart, "that I know not what it is to fear. It is with perfect composure that I commit myself to God and the laws of the Commonwealth." He stood his ground manfully until his bodily weakness obliged him to go home.

There followed the darkest period of his life in the New World. Twice after that he received an order to leave town within five days. Mobs threatened him, stones were thrown at him in the streets, and as

he traveled about churches were closed to him. Private houses were not large enough to accommodate his hearers and he held his meetings sometimes in theaters and circus tents. Barns were fitted up for service, and such meeting houses were common, especially in New Hampshire. "We felt ourselves highly accommodated," he said, "if we had a clean one."

An attempt was made to expel him from town as a vagrant, since he owned no property. Mr. Sargent promptly presented him with a corner of his garden, giving him a deed to the land, which made him a freeholder in Gloucester.

It was certainly not a serene life, nor one conducive to devout meditation that Mr. Murray now led. He was the captain of a church militant. His little company of Rellyites were the advance guard of liberal thought in the New World, and every man was a warrior, was obliged to be, however peaceful his inclinations.

Once when Mr. Sargent and he were sitting by the winter fire, they were startled by what they supposed was the roar of a rising tempest. As the sound grew louder, they could distinguish the hoots and the

yells of the angry mob which came rushing down the main street of the little town and surrounded the house, threatening to ride Mr. Murray out of town or burn the house over his head. What diverted them from their purpose we are not told. Possibly it was his own magnetic personality.

As far back as his early life in England, Mr. Murray had evidenced the power to control the passions of men. Political riots were common at the time and, one night, in returning from a meeting, he got in the midst of a violent mob armed with sticks and stones and bent on the killing of an unpopular officer, as well as the destruction of certain public buildings. A messenger had been hastily dispatched to call the militia to disperse the rioters when Mr. Murray mounted a box and began to address them. At first the deafening uproar drowned his voice, but little by little, he gained the attention of those about him and when the soldiers at last arrived, they found the crowd quietly dispersing. Then an old nobleman came forward and, grasping his hand, exclaimed, "Young man, I thank you. I do not know your name, but I bear testimony to your wonderful abil-



ities. By your exertions this night you have saved much blood and treasure."

Throughout these dark Gloucester days, he was cheered by the stanch fidelity of his friends and his unwavering faith in the care of a loving God.

Mr. Murray was not the only one to suffer; Universalists everywhere bore their share of trial bravely. Conspicuous among the persecuted were Mr. Eddy and General Gridley. Mr. Eddy was an influential member of the Beneficent Congregational Church of Providence, still one of the most prominent churches in the city. He was suspected of inclining to Universalism and was tried for heresy. The string of epithets applied to this good man by his pastor could hardly be repeated in polite society. The trial resulted in excommunication, which was publicly carried out, the heretic being required to stand in the broad aisle of the church and to listen to the reading of his sentence and to an anathema giving him over to the buffetings of Satan. He bore all this with such remarkable dignity and meekness, though he was a man of much spirit, that certain members of the congregation repented

their harshness and went to him privately to beg him to return to their communion.

"If," he said, "you will take me back as publicly as you have expelled me, I will come."

This they refused to do, and he joined a small group of Universalists, which met together occasionally, though no society was established till 1831, a year after Mr. Eddy's death.

Richard Gridley, surveyor and civil engineer, was a Boston man. He had been a British soldier, commanding the artillery under Wolfe at the fall of Quebec, but at the breaking out of the war for Independence, he replied, in response to an inquiry from England as to his sympathies, "I shall fight for justice and my country." He planned the fortifications at Breed's Hill and himself trained the guns on the British, June 17, 1775. He also raised the breastworks at Dorchester Heights and was conspicuous throughout the war for his bravery and loyalty to the Colonies. At his furnace in Stoughton, Massachusetts, the part of the town now Canton, he made for the patriot army the first cannon and mortars ever cast in the country. In 1777,

Washington ordered him to construct the fortifications of Cape Ann and protect the harbor at Gloucester. While there he attended the services of Mr. Murray and became a decided and enthusiastic Universalist. When the war was over and a great peace celebration was held in the meeting-house at Stoughton, General Gridley was left out in the cold, uninvited and forced to remain at home, his conspicuous services to his country all ignored because of his liberal faith.

## Chapter XII

### “THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH”

“Most can raise the flowers now,  
For all have got the seed.”

TENNYSON.

The Gloucester friends of Mr. Murray, in 1779, had formed themselves into what they considered an organization, and built a plain little meeting house in which, on Christmas day, 1780, they held service. This was the first Universalist Church to be built in America.

A sea captain in the congregation presented them with a small crank organ, which he had captured from an English ship during the Revolution. It had three barrels, each arranged for ten tunes, but, alas, they were found to be wholly inappropriate for religious services, so another barrel of ten tunes was added, and these ten tunes supplied the congregation with music for fifteen years!

The members of the little society expected annoyance from their former church brethren, but anticipated no serious trouble, since the Declaration of Rights drawn up for the Colonies provided that "no subject shall be hurt, molested or restrained in his person, liberty or estate, for worshipping God in the manner and season most agreeable to the dictates of his own conscience." Also, "that all religious societies shall, at all times, have the exclusive right of electing their public leaders and contracting with them for their support and maintenance"; but the intolerant authorities in Gloucester were angered beyond measure at the presumption of the seventeen disgraced and excommunicated members in *daring* to form a new organization and had no notion of tamely allowing the new church to exist. They would teach these rebellious "Rellyites" that laws could be made to serve the ends desired by those who enforced them! The Elders were backed by the authority of the *Church*, almost equal in importance to that of the *State*.

The Baptist Church of Gloucester, from which Mr. Murray's little band had sep-

arated, was the "Territorial Orthodox Church," which meant, in Colonial times, that the people in that district were bound to contribute to its support, whatever their religious convictions. This made endless trouble whenever a new church was formed. The people might finance the new society, but the obligation to the old one continued. Therefore, notwithstanding their excommunication, the members of Mr. Murray's congregation were still assessed for the current expenses of the Baptists. When they refused to pay, the sheriffs seem to have been particularly malicious in seizing articles which it would most annoy their owners to lose. The captain of a brig, on the eve of leaving the harbor on a long voyage, had his anchor taken from him. Mr. Winthrop Sargent, who entertained largely, lost all his table furnishings. This was in the autumn of 1783, and the members of the "Independent Church of Christ," as the Gloucester band called themselves, at once began legal proceedings to establish their right to support the church and pastor of their own choosing, and no other, relying on the already established laws in the Declaration of Rights, to

enable them to assert their independence of the Baptist Church, *if they could prove that Mr. Murray was a religious teacher*; this was the joint in their armor at which their enemies aimed. The Orthodox elders insisted that a man who believed in Universal Redemption could not be so considered.

Mr. Murray was urged to allow the prosecution to proceed in his name, almost its only hope of success, in the opinion of the lawyers. His reluctance to appear as principal in a suit in which money was involved after his years of patient, faithful service, "free as the sunshine," was pathetic. His distress was so keen that many friends entreated him to dismiss all thought of the matter; but when a persistent lawyer finally made him realize how far-reaching would be the good if this right to freedom of choice could once be established, he immediately gave his consent, accepting the situation as one more sacrifice demanded for his Master's cause.

After repeated trials at Salem and Ipswich, beside many private hearings, all accompanied by discouraging reverses, the case was finally decided in June, 1786, in

favor of the Gloucester Church. Then Mr. Murray had an abundant reward for his concession in the satisfaction that through his instrumentality religious liberty had made a great stride forward.

"I have been the happy instrument," he wrote, "to give a death wound to that hydra, parochial persecution."

The agitation with regard to Mr. Murray was no mere local disturbance, but spread throughout the Colonies. It is inconceivable that any religious teacher could now make such an upheaval in the established order of legislative affairs. In those days, when the Parish was the Town, and the affairs of Church government closely interlocked with those of the State, Mr. Murray's heresy became a matter of grave civil importance.

About this time the convention for drawing up the Constitution of the Commonwealth was in session at Boston. Mr. Sargent and other good friends of Mr. Murray were delegates, but there were others on the committee who were seriously alarmed at the rapid spread of his teachings. An attempt was made to insert clauses to effectually silence, if not to drive him from



the State, and also to prevent the establishment of other Universalist churches in Massachusetts.

One article submitted announced that, as good morals were essential to the preservation of civil society, and the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments was essential to good morals, all people should be enjoined to attend and support those religious teachers who preached such doctrines. The debate was long and fiery, but the resolution was finally rejected.

Then followed an attempt to juggle the article, as finally presented to the people, by adding to the clause, "and every denomination of Christians shall be equally under the protection of the laws," the words, "except such whose principles are repugnant to the Constitution." Of course, Universalism would have been judged "repugnant to the Constitution," and it was well known that both these changes were aimed solely at the followers of Murray. The bitter antagonism of the authorities was a severe personal trial, but it furthered the cause of Universalism as nothing else could have done.

While this was in progress, a prosecu-

tion against Mr. Murray for performing a marriage ceremony was commenced, on the ground that he was not an ordained minister. The verdict went against him and he was fined fifty dollars. Realizing that this meant a succession of suits of like nature, and undoubtedly with like results, his friends advised him to leave the country till an appeal for a reversal could be made to the legislature. Mr. Murray felt the wisdom of the advice, and on the sixth of January, 1788, he embarked for England, his passage being paid and ample provision made for his stay abroad by the Boston Universalists. Also he was provided with many letters of introduction which gained him cordial recognition throughout England. In London, where he arrived in March, he was hailed as "the famous American preacher," and received calls from various parishes to remain as permanent pastor. These signs of approval more than balanced the opposition which his doctrines often aroused. He had no desire to remain abroad longer than necessity demanded. His thoughts and love were with the adopted country, which had given him new life and interests, and he was in all

---

respects a loyal American. The only tie to the Old World was his aged mother, whose joy at his return and pride in his developed powers was one of the chief delights of the visit.

The petition sent by the Gloucester church to the legislature was successful, and Mr. Murray returned to America in the early summer, on the same ship with John Adams and his wife. It was a long and stormy voyage; even after reaching Portland harbor, they were detained some time waiting for a favorable wind, but, with the congenial company on board, the time passed pleasantly. At Mr. Adams' special request, Mr. Murray preached every Sunday and sometimes during the week. He reached Boston in July, and the day of his arrival the Governor gave a reception in his honor, and there was great rejoicing among the liberals.

Almost his first act on landing was to publish his marriage intention, and in October, 1788, he married, at Salem, the widowed daughter of Mr. Sargent, Mrs. Judith Stevens. She was a beautiful woman, of remarkable learning for those times, and a writer of some reputation.

Her energy and strength of will were lavished without stint in behalf of Mr. Murray, whom she regarded as a saint exiled from heaven for the good of New England. There were times when her zeal was greater than her tact, but much should be forgiven such affection.\*

Determined to take no more risks, the Gloucester society appointed Christmas, 1788, as the day to renew the ordination of their pastor. Purposely, the event was observed with great ceremony, and given all possible publicity. An elaborate account of the proceedings was published in the *Centinel* of January 3, 1789. During the service the committee presented Mr. Murray with a Bible as a solemn seal to his ordination. He preached from the text, "The harvest is plenty but the laborers are few."

The sermon was peculiarly appropriate to conditions among Universalists. Until the close of the Revolution the only

\* There were two children by this marriage, a son dying in infancy, and a daughter, Julia, who grew up and married but none of whose descendants are now living.

churches with any kind of organization were at Gloucester, Boston, Newport and Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The scarcity of ministers seems to have been a serious drawback to the work. In 1785, there were but thirteen, not nearly enough to provide settled workers in the places eager for them. Many of the New England towns could have preaching but once in three months. Another source of embarrassment was the difficulty in obtaining the money for salaries, and most of the regular ministers were obliged to work at some trade during the week. Many of them were teachers, but all occupations were represented. Mr. Parker of Portsmouth, one of the most eloquent preachers and a close friend of Mr. Murray, labored hard at his trade of blacksmith. Nearly all had families and were unable to follow Mr. Murray's example of free service.

In 1776, while in New Jersey, Mr. Murray published from the London edition a hymnal entitled "Christian Hymns, Poems and Spiritual Songs," by James and John Rely. At the close of the book is printed a list of subscribers which gives some idea of the strength of the active Universalist

sympathizers in New England. There are two hundred and twenty-three names, subscribing for four hundred and sixty-eight books. Providence, Rhode Island, leads in the number of subscribers and Gloucester in the number of copies taken.

It was so continually urged against the Universalists that they had no organization and so were not a religious body, that they soon felt the need of drawing together in some association to rid themselves of this source of annoyance, as well as for their mutual help and encouragement. As a result of Mr. Murray's urgent efforts the New England societies held their first convention at Oxford, Massachusetts, in September, 1785, and decided on the name "Universalist." Previous to this time they had been given no permanent, distinguishing title, but had been called "Belly-ites," "Restorationists," "Redemptionists," and less frequently, "Universalites." We think of a convention as a large body of people. There were present at this one nine laymen and four ministers. Of course this ought not to be taken as an indication of numerical strength. The country was unsettled, traveling difficult and the people,

impoverished from a long war, had neither time nor money to leave home. There were seventeen present at Philadelphia in May, 1790, when a general convention was held and articles of faith drawn up. This was a peculiarly difficult task. The Universalists had come from all denominations, and had but one common ground of belief, the final redemption of all mankind. They even differed as to punishment after death or the duration of that punishment, if there were any. One of their most recent and prominent converts, Dr. Winchester, then believed that the wicked would be tormented only a few ages or millions of years, for which astonishing liberalism he had been expelled from the Methodist Church; yet these early fathers exercised toward each other such tolerance and wisdom that they were able to formulate a creed which was an offense to none. The knotty problems were either ignored for the time, or couched wholly in Scriptural language, upon which the believer could put his own interpretation. This was the official creed of the Universalists till the Winchester confession adopted in 1803.

## Chapter XIII

### THE CREST OF THE HILL

“Before his journey closes,  
He shall find the stubborn thistle, bursting  
Into glossy purples, which outredden  
All voluptuous garden roses.”

TENNYSON.

In 1785 the Boston Universalists purchased Dr. Mather's old meeting house at the corner of North Bennet and Hanover streets and on October 23, 1793, Mr. Murray was installed as pastor. It was agreed that the Gloucester parish might command his services in any need and that a portion of his time should still be theirs.

Now that Mr. Murray had a wife and family dependent on him, he was obliged to accept a stated salary but he yielded to the necessity with reluctance. For thirteen years he had taken from day to day “what the Lord provided.” He exercised the same faith with regard to his preaching, and depended wholly on the inspiration of the moment.



"Had I prepared my sermons," he often said, "my English would have been more elegant, but I should have missed the joys and blessings of a life of faith."

Shortly after his removal to Boston, he bewailed in a letter to a friend the high cost of living in the city. "I suffer much from the high prices," he wrote. "Though I have *twenty-two dollars a week*. Butter is twenty cents a pound; eggs sixteen cents a dozen; milk six cents a quart; the best beef nine cents a pound and we are obliged to pay our maid in the kitchen one dollar a week!"

Mr. Murray had now reached the Indian Summer of his life and it held golden rewards for the previous days of conflict when he had sought the path of duty rather than that of pleasure. There were still battles to be fought, but friends were numerous and powerful. The Boston parish regarded him with unlimited confidence and affection. His relation with his young people was unique among New England ministers for he not only encouraged their innocent pleasures but made merry with them himself.

Mrs. Murray was a great help always in

parish work, but she sometimes carried her championship of her husband to great lengths. Hosea Ballou once supplied the Hanover Street pulpit for several weeks while Mr. Murray was in the South. On the last Sunday Mrs. Murray was much displeased with the ground he took on some doctrinal point. During the prayer she beckoned a member of the choir to her and asked him to announce that the doctrine to which they had listened that morning was not the doctrine usually taught from that pulpit. Unwillingly the gentleman did so just after the singing of the last hymn. Mr. Ballou merely remarked courteously, "You have heard what the brother has said, I beg you to take note of the same," and pronounced the benediction. This incident made a tremendous stir. The congregation was indignant and held a meeting after service to appoint a committee to call on Mr. Ballou that evening with an apology. The unfortunate member of the choir was severely dealt with, but it did not seem to occur to any one that it was possible to deal with the chief offender, Mrs. Murray.

September 4, 1793, the year Mr. Murray came to Boston, a General Convention was

held at Oxford, Massachusetts, and the organization then formed has never since failed to hold a yearly meeting.

The Universalist ministers were frequently challenged to debates by the leading clergy of other denominations. These discussions, which drew together large audiences and did much toward the rapid spread of the faith, were usually a keen battle of wits, well worth listening to and much enjoyed even by those who had no vital interest in the outcome; they were something of a social function—like the singing school. The ammunition for this warfare was drawn almost wholly from the Bible and the ease with which the opposed clergy hurled texts at each other proved they had at least searched the Scripture. Mr. Murray was an adept at this kind of controversy.

Down in Pennsylvania there was a traveling preacher of the same name, Rev. Noah Murray, who was also keen in argument. On one of his journeys he was challenged to debate by a Baptist clergyman. The two sat down together at sunset with their Bibles. The Baptist had secured the only large Bible with concordance in America,

hoping thus to duly impress and dishearten his adversary at the start. At sunrise they were still at it, but with this difference—the Baptist had changed his views, to the great indignation of his flock, and his subsequent liberal preaching so angered them, that his resignation was demanded.

In Boston at a later day, Dr. Lyman Beecher and Hosea Ballou had a famous debate. At its close, there was an open discussion, in the course of which Dr. Beecher quoted from Psalms 9:17, “The wicked shall be turned into hell and all nations that forget God.”

“Now, Brother Ballou,” he said, turning to him, “I have got them into hell, let’s see you get them out!”

“In Revelations we are told,” responded Father Ballou, calmly, “‘Death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them, and death and hell were cast into the lake of fire.’ Now, Brother Beecher, I have got them out, let’s see you put them back again!”

Mr. Murray still traveled during the summer and in 1790 visited Philadelphia, where the Universalists had never ceased to endeavor to secure his services perma-

nently. They now offered him a house and a yearly income of £400 if he would consent to become their pastor. They were willing to give him abundant time to settle his Eastern affairs. The offer was a tempting one, especially as the church was made up of people of unusual intelligence and high position. The family of Benjamin Franklin was among the number. Mr. Murray could not make up his mind to leave the New England friends who had so loyally stood by him in his hours of trial.

It was during this summer that he made a special pilgrimage to Good Luck—a sad one—for his old friend, Mr. Potter, had passed away. The heat was intense and the long dusty ride with no cordial welcome to be anticipated at its close was disagreeable in the extreme. He arrived at sunset and took a solitary walk about the place. As he neared the kennel, a strange dog growled and strained at its chain to get at him. He passed the garden where Mr. Potter and he had so often worked together; it was overgrown with weeds and brambles. Years ago they had planted trees in opposite corners; his own was green and sturdy, Mr. Potter's withered and dead—

"as it should be," said Mr. Murray. "I could not bear, in my grief, to see anything flourishing when the master of the fields was no longer there."

In the quiet grove back of the meeting house, he stood with uncovered head by the grave already bright with delicate wild flowers. Shafts of sunset light came through the trees and made a little cathedral of the place. The rustling of the leaves or the song of a bird as it sank to rest were the only sounds to break the silence. Long Mr. Murray stood with overflowing eyes. "Oh, why did I not come oftener? I might have done," he cried. It was the old regret, old as man. Always the things we might have done so easily are those that torment.

As he went back to the house, Mrs. Potter came to meet him; neither could speak for emotion, but they sat long in silent communion on the rustic seat which Mr. Potter had built beneath the trees.

On Sunday morning he stood once more, and for the last time, in the little pulpit. There were many old friends in the congregation but the majority were strangers. Looking through the open window toward

the lonely grave beneath the trees, Mr. Murray preached a sermon that was partly a memorial to the dead and partly a clarion call to the living to close in the ranks and press forward.

In his will, Mr. Potter had left the meeting house with the acre of land surrounding it "To my ever dear friend, John Murray." Owing to the mismanagement of the executors, who brought in fraudulent bills, a portion of the estate had to be sold to satisfy the demands upon it. When the deed was passed no reservation of the meeting house was made and the little church subsequently came into the hands of the Methodists.

## Chapter XIV

### ACROSS THE BORDER

"The sky is filled with stars, invisible by day."

LONGFELLOW.

His years of fatiguing travel with exposure to all kinds of weather and the nights he had spent in prayer and preaching, began to tell upon Mr. Murray's vigorous frame. At sixty-nine, he was an old man and growing very feeble. His mind was keen as ever and his genial spirits were still the life of every company he entered.

He was present at the installation of Rev. Edward Turner at Salem, June 22, 1809, and made the dedicatory prayer. It was almost the last time he took part in any special service. Mr. Richards of Portsmouth preached the sermon. The eager attention of the white-haired "Father Murray," as they had begun to call him, so moved Mr. Richards that he suddenly turned and seized him by the hand, exclaim-



ing in the words of Elisha to Elijah, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horseman thereof." The act was startlingly sudden and Mr. Murray shook with emotion.

On October 19, 1809, came the stroke of paralysis which made him a helpless cripple for six years. He bore the trial with patience and sweetness. If there was any time when he showed rebellion of spirit it was when the bells rang for church on Sunday and he could not obey their call. Then sometimes he turned his face to the wall to hide the tears which streamed down his cheeks.

Once in a while at some special service or when the weather was particularly favorable, he was taken to church. On such occasions, the waiting people rose and stood in reverential silence as their white-haired old pastor was carried down the aisle by his strong young friends.

The Bible seemed always open before him. Mrs. Murray said that "he enjoyed excursions into all literature, but the Bible was his home." People came to him with their joys and their sorrows. Clergymen of differing denominations sought his ad-

---

vice or his interpretations of disputed Scriptural questions.

On the morning of August 27, 1815, he became alarmingly ill, but he rallied and his physician told him there seemed to be no immediate danger.

"Is the time again put off?" he exclaimed, with a touch of impatience. "I want to go home."

Friday morning, September first, he seemed to lose consciousness of his surroundings. His right hand moved perpetually in a familiar preaching gesture as though he were addressing some invisible congregation. When Mrs. Murray bent her ear to his constantly moving lips, she found he was repeating text after text of Scripture. Saturday evening the restless hand was quiet and the whispering lips were stilled. At six o'clock on Sunday morning, September 3, 1815, without a sigh or quiver, John Murray went "home," as he had longed to do.

The funeral was held the following day from the North Bennet Street Church. The pulpit and galleries were hung with black and a long procession of the little children he had loved preceded the body up

the aisle. Mr. Murray's dear friend and successor at Gloucester, Rev. Thomas Jones, preached the funeral sermon, with the text from Ecclesiastics xii, 7. The Rev. Hosea Ballou of Salem, and the Rev. Edward Turner of Charlestown, offered prayer.

He was buried in the Sargent tomb in the Granary Burying-ground. No stone marked the spot, and as the years went by there was a growing feeling among the now prospering Universalists that this was not a fitting burial for their great apostle who had stirred the country with the tidings of Universal Love. The means for the purchase of a lot at Mount Auburn and the erection of a monument was raised by voluntary contributions and on June 8, 1837, the removal took place.

There could be no greater proof of the change which had been wrought in public sentiment toward the Universalists than the tribute of this last service. The First Church was not large enough to hold the crowd which was patiently waiting outside when the doors were thrown open at two o'clock. Sebastian Streeter preached an impressive sermon from Joshua xxiv, 32:

“And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor.”

It was one of Boston's dreariest days, with a cold east wind and a drizzling rain: yet in this town where he had been treated with contempt and even stoned, his body was followed to Mount Auburn by a procession three-quarters of a mile in length and the crowd stood in reverent silence about the grave as Father Ballou preached the committal sermon.

There is probably not a person in the world to-day, and certainly there has not been a Universalist for many years, who holds the same views as did Mr. Murray. Long before his death it was a bitter cross to him that so many of the ministers whom he loved differed from him on doctrinal questions, but the essential principle for which he fought and suffered, the final reconciliation of every soul with the will of God, is still the cornerstone of our faith.

Although we have gained so much by our acceptance of the liberal thought, one cannot but feel in reading the old records that

we are in danger of losing a valuable part of our birthright. One never realizes how far he has sailed from shore till he looks back at the ever widening distance between himself and land. So it has seemed in looking backward that we are drifting very far, some of us, from the safe harbor of prayerful consecration which made this pioneer of the liberal faith, willing to bear cheerfully, the contempt of his neighbors and the persecution of the State.

THE END















MAY 31 1978

MAY 15 1995

JAN 24 1999



3 2044 016 948 622

